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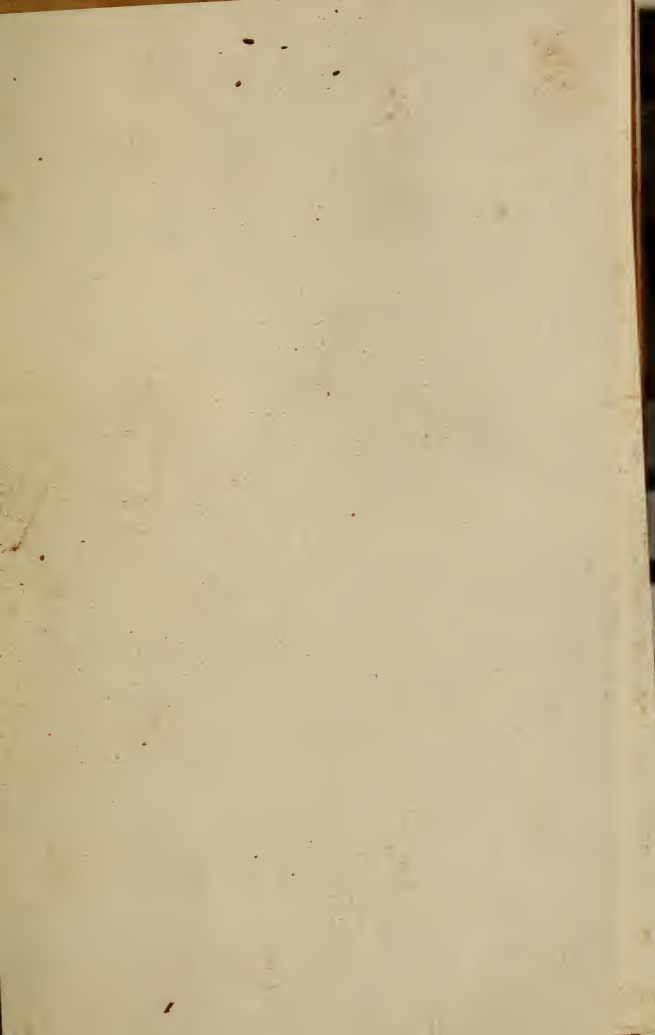
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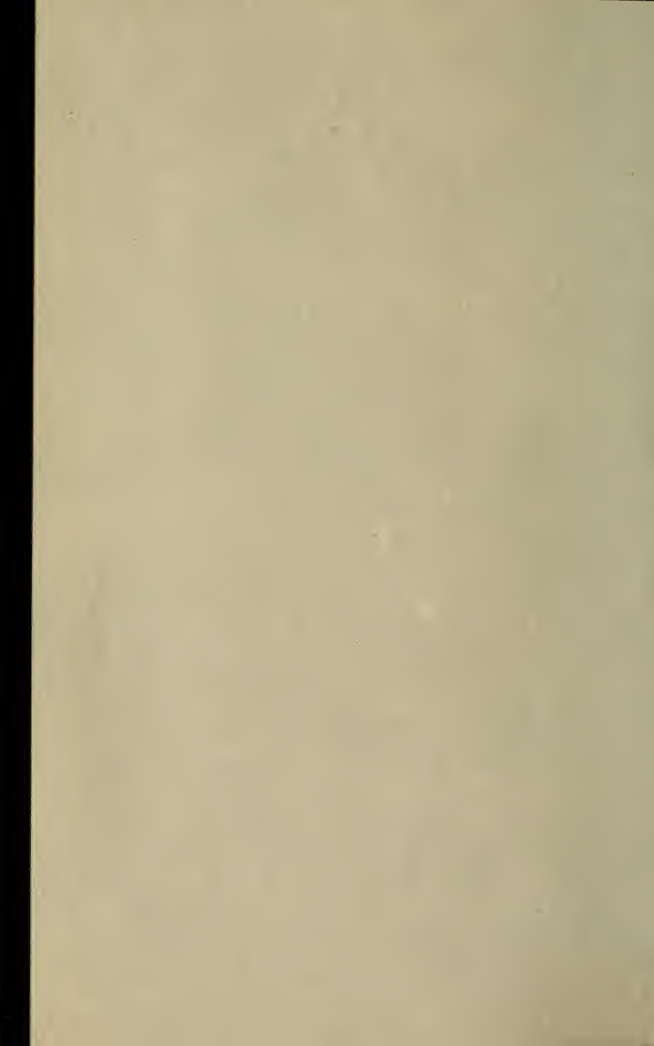
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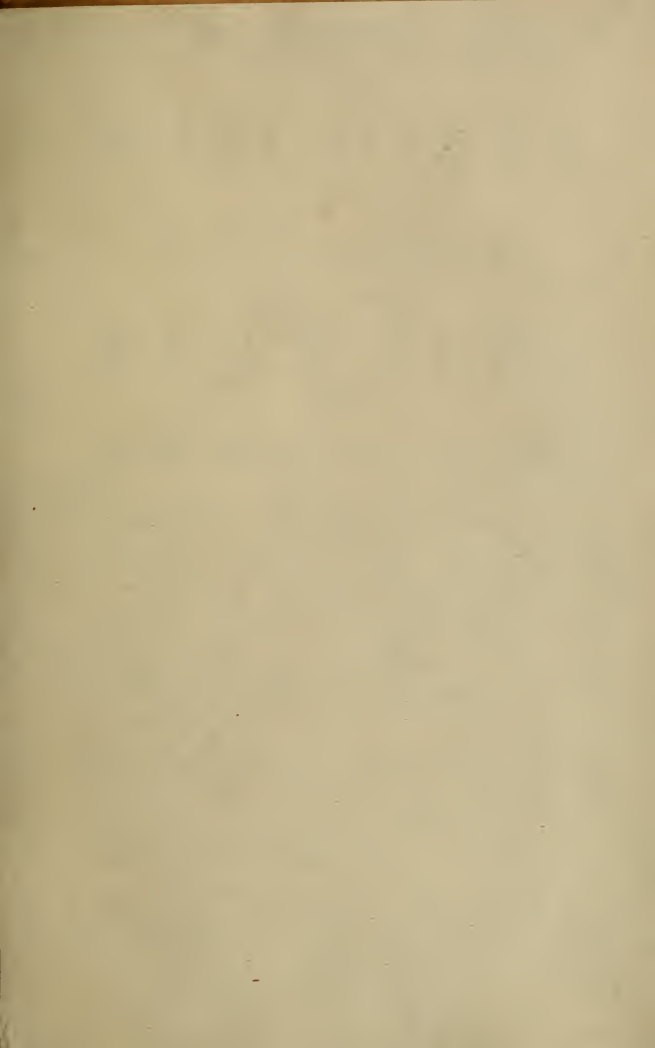
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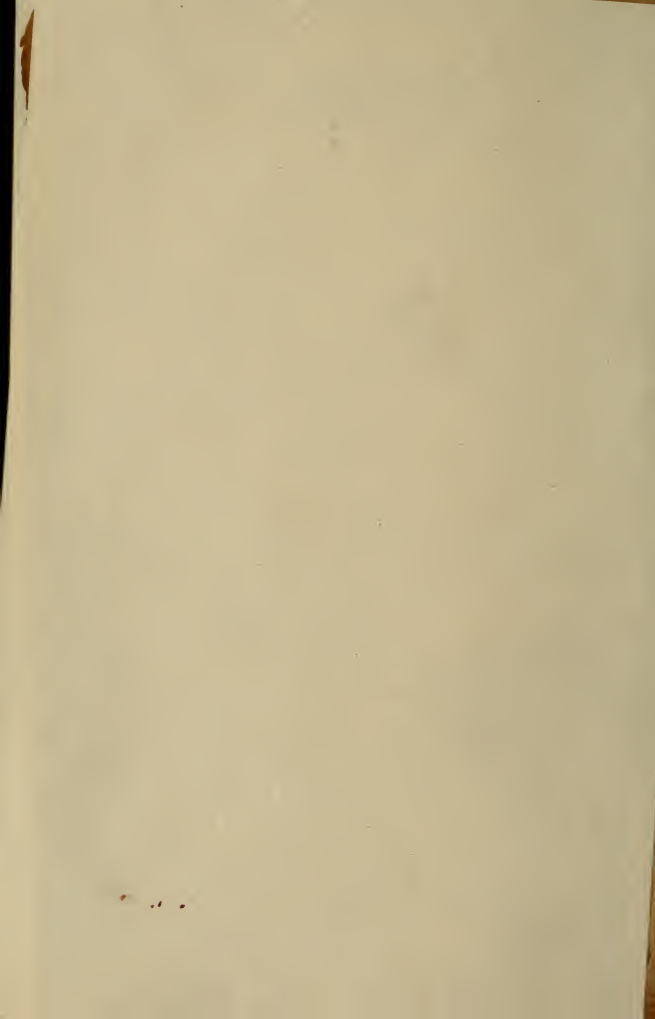
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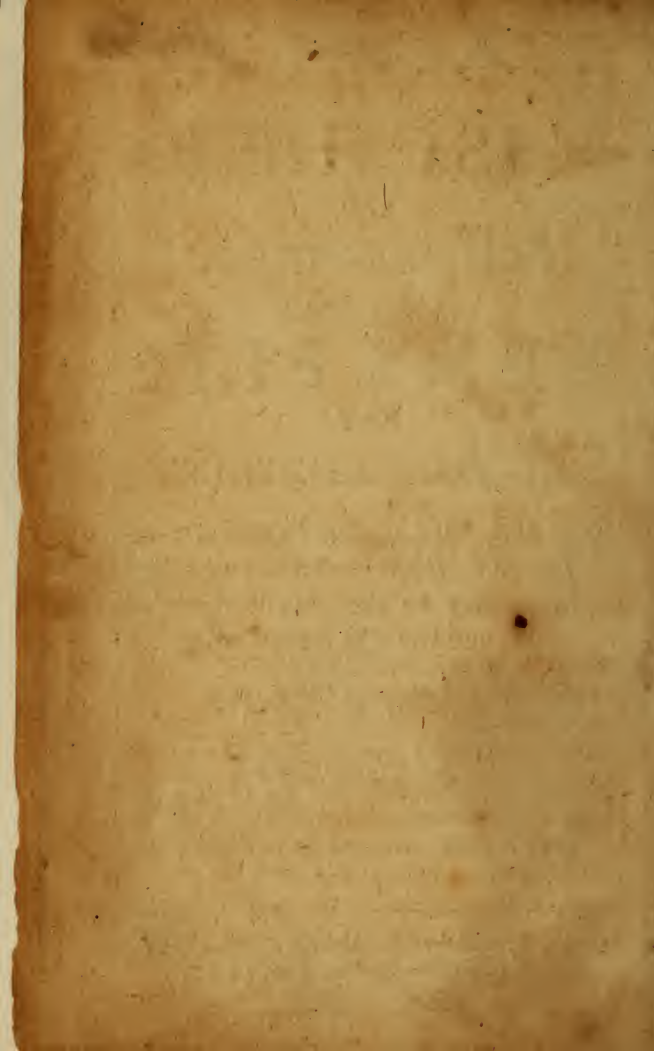
THE
MISCHIEFS
OF
Self-Ignorance,
AND THE
BENEFITS
OF
Self-Acquaintance;

Opened in Divers Sermons at
Dunstan's-West : And Published
in answer to the Accusations of
some, and the Desires of others.

By *Richard Baxter.*

For if a man think himself to be something when he is
nothing, he deceiveth himself : But let every man
prove his own work; and then shall he have re-
joycing in himself alone, and not in another; For
every man shall bear his own burden.

London, Printed by R. White for F. Tyton, at the
three daggers in Fleet-street, 1662.
at 2^s. 6^d. bound.





To the right Honourable
Anne Countess of
Balcarres, &c.

Madam,



Though it be usual in Dedications to proclaim the honour of inscribed names, and though the proclaiming of yours be a work that none are like to be offended at that know you, they esteeming you the honour of your sex and nation; yet that you may see I intend not to displease you by any unsafe or unsavoury applause, I shall presume here to lay a double dishonour upon you: The one by prefixing your name to these lean and hasty Sermons: The other by laying part of the blame upon yourself, and telling the world that the fault is partly yours that they are published; Not only yours I confess: For

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had it not been for some such auditors as Christ had, Luk. 20. 20. and Mark 12. 13. and for the frequent reports of such as are mentioned Psal. 35. 11. I had not written down all that I delivered, and so had been incapable of so easily answering your desires. But it was you that was not content to hear them, but have invited them to recite their message more publickly : as if that were like to be valued, and effectual upon common hearts, which through your strength of charity and holy appetite, is so with yours. My own thoughts went in the middle way ; neither thinking as those that accused these Sermons of injurious tendencie, against ——— I know not whom, or what. (that have been so long in contention, that they dream they are still contending, and fancie every word they hear, from those that their uncharitableness calleth adversaries, to signifie some hostile terrible thing ; as the scalded head doth fear cold water :) nor yet did I thinke them worthy to be tendered by such a publication to the world : But valuing your judgement, and knowing that the subject is of great necessity, though the manner of handling be dull and dry, I hope it may be profitable to some, and I find nothing in it to be hurtful unto any, and therefore

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therefore submit, and leave you both to bear the blame, and take the thanks, if any be returned.

I perceive you value the subjects which you have found in the practice of your soul to be most useful : As they that know God would fain have all others to know him ; so those that know themselves, do love the Glass, and would have others to make use of it : I wonder not if your experience of the benefits of self-acquaintance , provoke you to desire to have more partakers in so profitable and so sweet a knowledge. Had you not known your self, you had never known your Saviour, your God, your way and your end, as you have done : you had never been so well acquainted with the symptoms and cure of the diseases of the Soul ; the nature and exercise of grace, the way of mortification, and the comfortable supports, refreshments and fore-tasts of heavenly believers : you had never so clearly seen the vanity of all the pomp and fulness of the world, nor so easily and resolutely despised its flatteries and baits, nor so quietly borne variety of afflictions ; nor imitated Moses, Heb. 11. 25, 26. nor received the holy Character, Psal. 15. He that is a stranger to himself, his sin, his misery, his necessity.

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ty, &c. is a stranger to God, and to all that might denominate him wise or happy. To have taken the true measure of our capacities, abilities, infirmities, and necessities, and thereupon to perceive what is really **BEST FOR US**, and most agreeable to our case, is the first part of true practical saving knowledge. Did the distracted mindless world consider, what work they have at home for their most serious thoughts and care and diligence, and of what unspeakable concernment and necessity it is, and that men carry within them the matter of their final doom, and the beginning of endless joy or sorrows, they would be called home from their busie-idleness, their laborious-loss of precious time, and unprofitable vagaries, and would be studying their hearts, while they are doting about a multitude of impertinencies, and would be pleasing God while they are purveying for the flesh; and they would see that it more concerneth them to know the day of their salvation, and now to lay up a treasure in Heaven, that they may die in faith, and live in everlasting joy and Glory, than in the crowd and noise of the ambitious, covetous, voluptuous Sensualists, to run after a feather, till time is past, and mercy gone, and endless woe hath unexpectedly surprized them.

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them. Yet do these dead men think they live, because they laugh, and talke, and ride, and goe, and dwell among gnats and flies in the sun shine, and not with worms and dust in darknesse : They think they are awake, because they dream that they are busie ; and that they are doing the works of men, because they make a pudder and a noise for finer cloaths, and larger room, and sweeter morsels, and lower congces and submissions than their poorer undeceived neighbours have : They think they are sailing to felicity, because they are tossed up and down : And if they can play the Jacks among the fishes, or the wolves or foxes in the flocks of Christ, or if they can attain to the honour of a Pestilence, to be able to do a great deal of hurt, they are proud of it, and look as high as if they saw neither the Grave nor Hell, nor knew how quickly they must be taken down, and laid so low, that [the Righteous shall see it, and fear, and laugh at them, saying, Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness, Psal. 52. 6, 7. [Behold, these are the ungodly that prosper in the world, and increasē in riches ; surely they are set in slippery places,

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and cast down to destruction and brought to desolation as in a moment; and utterly consumed with terrors; As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image, *Psal. 73.* Though while they lived they blessed themselves, and were praised by men; yet when they die they carry nothing away; their glory shall not descend after them; like sheep they are laid in the grave: death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; Man in honour abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish; This their way is their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings, *Psal. 49.* *As the proverb is, At last the wolfs skin is brought to the market, and the Foxes to the Furrier. They shall find that God is not afraid to lay the hand of Justice on the stoutest of them, and will be as bold with silken shining gallants, as with the poorest worms; and will spit in the face of that mans glory, who durst spit in the face of the Glory of his Redeemer; and will trample upon the interest which is set up against the interest of Christ. The jovial world do now think that self-study is too Melancholy a thing: and they choose to be distracted*
for

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for fear of being melancholy : and will be
Mad in Solomons sense, that they may be
wise and happy in their own : Eccles. 2. 2.
The heart of fools is in the house of mirth,
and the heart of the wise in the house of
mourning, Eccles. 7. 4. and yet there is
most Joy in the Hearts of the wise, and
least solid peace in the hearts of fools :
They know that conscience hath so much
against them, that they dare not hear its accu-
sations and its sentence: They dare not look into
the hideous dungeon of their hearts : nor per-
use the accounts of their bankrupt souls, nor
read the history of their impious unprofitable
lives, lest they should be tormented before
the time : They dare not live like seri-
ous men, lest they should lose thereby the
delights of bruits. O sinful men ! against
what light, both natural and supernatural,
do they offend ! They see how all things haste
away ; The names of their predecessors are
left as a warning to them ; every corps
that is carried to the grave, being dead, yet
speaketh : and every bone that is thence
cast up, doth rise as a witness against their
luxury and lust : and yet they will have
their wills and pleasure while they may,
whatever it cost them : and they will set
their houses on fire that they might have one
merry

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merry blaze, and warm them once before they die.

O Madam, how happy are you (if one on earth may be called happy,) that have looked home so often and so seriously, that now you can dwell at home in peace, and need not, as the ungodly, be a terror to your self, nor run away from your self, nor seek a place to hide you from your self: when impious vagrants have so abused their Consciences, that they dare not converse with them, nor meet them alone or in the dark! what a mercy is it, that in the great Reconciler you are reconciled to your Conscience, and that it doth not find you out as an enemy, but is a messenger of peace and of good tidings to you! That you need not the smiles of great ones to refresh you, nor pompous entertainments, complements, plays or sports to recreate you and drive away your sorrows; but that you can find more blessed and delightful company and employment at home; That you can daily retire into your self, and there peruse a richer treasure, than bodily eyes on earth can see; and there be taken up with a far more contenting satisfactory employment, and a more fruitful and pleasant converse and recreation, than any creature in Court or Countrey can afford:

That

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That your Joy is laid up where the hand of violence cannot touch it; and that they that can deprive you of estate, and liberty, and life, yet cannot take your comfort from you. That when fleshly unthrifts love not home, because all is spent, and they can expect no better entertainment there than want, confusion, chiding and distress, you can withdraw from a confused troublesome world, into a well-furnished and adorned soul, replenished with the precious fruits of the Spirit, and beautified with the image of your Lord! O Madam, what sweet and noble employment have you there, in comparison of that which worldlings are troubled with abroad! There you may read the sentence of your Justification, as foregoing and foreshewing the publique final sentence of your Judge: There you can converse with God himself, not in his vindictive Justice, but as he is Love: For the love that dwelleth so plentifully in you, doth prove that God dwelleth in you, and you in him, 1 Joh. 4. 7, 8, 16. There you may converse with Christ your head, that dwelleth in you by faith, Ephes. 3. 17. and with the Holy Ghost who dwelleth in you, and hath communion with you, by the beams of his illuminating, sanctifying, Confirming and comforting grace: There,

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There, as in his Temple you are speaking of his Glory, (1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. & 6. 19. with Psal. 29. 9.) and rejoycing in his holy praise, and remembring what he hath done for your soul: There you can peruse the Records of his Mercy, and think with gratitude and delight, how he did first illuminate you, and draw and engage your heart unto himself: What advantage he got upon you, and what iniquity he prevented by the mercies of your education, and how he secretly took acquaintance with you in your youth: How he delivered you from worldly fleshy snares; how he caused you to savour the things of the Spirit: how he planted you in a sound well ordered Church, where he quickened and conducted you by a lively faithful Ministry, and watered his gifts by their constant powerful preaching of his word, where Discipline was for a defence, and where your heart was warmed with the communion of the Saints, and where you learned to worship God in spirit and in truth; and where you were taught so effectually by God to discern between the precious and the vile, and to love those that are born of God, whom the world knoweth not, that no subtilties or calumnies of the Serpent can unteach it you, or ever be able to separate you from
that

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that love. You may read in these sacred Records of your Heart, how the Angel of the Covenant hath hitherto conducted you, through this wilderness towards the land of promise; how he hath been a cloud to you in the day, and a pillar of fire by night; how the Lord did number you with the people that are his flock, his portion, and the lot of his inheritance: and led you about in a desert land, instructed you, and kept you as the apple of his eye. (Deut. 32. 9. 10.) His Manna hath compassed your tent: his doctrine hath dropped as the rain, and his words distilled as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showres upon the grass, (v. 2.) As his beloved you have dwelt in safety by him; and the Lord hath covered you all the day long, (c. 33. 12.) when storms have risen, he hath been your refuge; and when dangers compassed you on every side, he hath hid you as in his pavilion, and his Angels have pitcht their tents about you, and born you up: you have been fortified in troubles, and enabled comfortably to undergoe them: in war and in peace; in your native country and in forreign lands; among your friends and among your enemies; in Court and Country; in prosperity and adversity, you have found that there is none like the God of Israel,

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Israel, who rideth upon the heaven in your help, and his excellency on the skie : The Eternal God hath been your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. (Deut. 34. 26, 27.) You may remember the mercies of your younger years, of your married state, and of your widow-hood : your comforts in your truly Noble Lord, though troubled and interrupted by his death, yet increased by the consideration of his felicity with Christ ; your comfort in your hopeful issue, though abated by the injury of Romish theft, which stole one of the Roses of your Garden, that they might boast of the sweetness when they called it their own : (I may well say, stole it, when all the cheat was performed by unknown persons in the dark ; and no importunity by you or me, could procure me one dispute or conference in her hearing, with any of the seducers, before her person was stoln away.) Though comforts conveyed by creatures must have their pricks, yet your experience hath partly taught you (and more will do) that by all the mixtures of sower and bitter ingredients, your Father doth temper you the most wholesome composition ; He chasteneth you for your profit, that you may be partaker of his Holiness (Heb. 12. 10.) and the least degree

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degree of Holiness cannot be purchased at too dear a rate. His rod and staffe have comforted you : and whatever are the beginnings, the End will be, the quiet fruit of Righteousness, when you have been exercised therein : And though man be mutable, and friends, and flesh, and heart have failed you, yet God is still the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever, Psal. 73. 26. O the variety of learning that is contained in the secret writings of a sanctified heart ! The variety of subjects for the most fruitful and delightful thoughts, which you may find recorded in the inwards of your soul ! How pleasant is it there to find the Characters of the special Love of God, the lineaments of his Image, the transcript of his Law, the harmony of his gifts and graces, the witness, the seal and the earnest of his Spirit, and the foretastes and beginnings of Eternal Life ! As Thankfulness abhors oblivion, and is a Recording grace, and keepeth Histories and Catalogues of Mercies ; so is it a Reward unto it self ; and by these Records it furnisheth the soul with matter for the sweetest employments and delights ; Is it not pleasant to you there to Read, how God hath confuted the objections of distrust ? how oft he hath condescended to your weakness,
and

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and pardoned you when you could not easily forgive your self ? how oft he hath entertained you in secret with his Love ? and visited you with his consolations ? How neer him sometimes you have got in fervent prayer, and serious meditation ? And when for a season he hath hid his face, how soon and seasonably he returned ? How oft he hath found you weeping, and hath wiped away your tears ? and calmed and quieted your troubled soul ? How he hath resolved your doubts, and expelled your fears ; and heard your prayers ? How comfortably he hath called you His Child ; and given you leave, and commanded you to call him Father ; when Christ hath brought you with boldness into his presence ! How sweet should it be to your remembrance, to think how the Love of Christ hath sometime exalted you above these sublunary things ! How the Spirit hath taken you up to Heaven, and shewed to your faith the Glory of the New Hierusalem, the blessed company of those Holy spirits that attend the Throne of the Majesty of God, and the shining face of your glorified Head ! By what seasonable and happy Messengers he hath sent you the Cluster of Grapes as the first fruits of the land of promise ! and commanded you oft to Take and
Eat

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Eat the Bread of Life? How oft he hath reached to your thirsty soul the fruit of the Vine, and turned it sacramentally into his blood, and bid you drink it in remembrance of him, till he come and feast you with his fullest Love, and satisfy you with the pleasure and presence of his Glory.

But the volumes of mercy written in your heart, are too great to be by me transcribed. I can easily appeal to you that are acquainted with it, whether such Heart-employment be not more pleasant and more profitable, than any of the entertainments that flashy wit, or gaudy gallantry, or merriments, luxurie, or preferments can afford? Is it not better converse with Christ at home; than with such as are described, Psa. 12. abroad? To dwell with all that blessed retinue, Gal. 5. 22, 23. than with Pride, Vainglory, Envy, Dissimulation, Hypocrisie, Falshood, time-wasting, soul-destroying pleasures, to say nothing of the filthiness which Christian years abhor the mention of, and which God himself in time will judge, Eph. 5. 3, 4, 5, 6. Heb. 13. 4. and the rest recited, Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. If ungodly persons do find it more unpleasant to converse at home, no wonder, when there is nothing but darkness and defilement; and when they have

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put God from them, and entertained Satan, so that their hearts are like to haunted houses, where terrible cries and apparitions do make it a place of fear to the inhabitants. But if their souls had such blessed inhabitants as yours; could they meet there with a reconciled God, a Father, a Saviour and a sanctifier; had they souls that kept a correspondence with Heaven, it would not seem so sad and terrible a life, to dwell at home, and withdraw from that noise of vanity abroad, which are but the drums and trumpets of the devil, to encourage his deluded followers, and drown the cries of miserable souls. Your dearest friends and chiefest treasure, are not abroad in Court or Country; but above you, and within you; where then should your delightful converse be, but where your friends and treasure are? Matth. 6. 21. Phil. 3. 20. Col. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. When there is almost nothing to be found in the conversation of the world, but discord and distraction, and confusion, and clamours, and malice, and treachery, is it not better to retire into such a heart, where notwithstanding infirmities and some doubts and fears, there is order, and concord, and harmony, and such Peace, as the world can neither give nor take away? O blessed be the hand of Love, that
blotted

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blotted out the names of Honour, and Riches, and Pleasures, and carnal interest, and accommodations, from your heart; and inscribed his own in Characters never to be obliterate! That turned out Usurpers, and so prepared and furnished your heart, as to make and judge it such, as no one is worthy of it but himself. O what a Court have you chosen for your abode? How high and Glorious! how pure and holy! unchangeable and safe! How ambitiously do you avoid ambition? How great are you in the lowliness of your mind? How high in your Humility? Will no lower a place than Heaven content you to converse in? (For Heart-converse and Heaven-converse are as much one, as beholding both the Glass and Face:) Will no lower correspondents satisfy you than the Host of Heaven? Cannot the company of imperfect mortals serve your turn? Nay, can you be satisfied with none below the Lord himself? Well, Madam, if you will needs have it so, it shall be so: what you judge **BEST FOR YOU**, shall be yours: what you had rather be, you are: and where you had rather dwell, you shall: and seeing you have understood that One thing is necessary, and have chosen the Good part, it shall not be

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taken from you, *Luke 10. 41, 42. Having first sought the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, you shall have such Additionalls as will do you good, Matth. 6. 33. Rom. 8. 28. Psal. 84. 11. You have learned to know while God is yours, how little of the Creature you need, and how little addition it maketh to your happiness (You are Wise enough if you live to God; and honourable enough if you are a member of Christ; and rich enough if you are an heir of heaven; and beautiful enough if you have the image of God: and yet having made your choice of these, how liberally hath God cast in as overplus, the inferior kind; which you find in losing them? As if he had said to you, as to Solomon, 2 Chron. 1. 11. [Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked Wisdom and knowledge for thy self—— Wisdom and Knowledge is granted to thee; and I will give thee Riches, and wealth, and honour——]*; *as if God would convince even flesh itself that none are like the servants of the Lord: And when the envious one hath said, that You serve not God for nought, though he hath been permitted to*
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put forth his hand, and touch you in your dearest friends and relations; your peace, your habitation and estate, yet hath he so restrained him, and supported you, as may easily convince you that the Worst of Christ is better than the Best of the World, or Sin.

I have purposely been long in opening the felicity of Heart-converse, as a matter of your own experience, both for the exciting of you to a life of Thankfulness to God, and that this undigested Treatise which you have drawn out into the light, may come to your hands with some supply, in that part of the Application which doth most concern you: And because your Name may draw the eyes of many others to read this Preface, I shall add here a few Directions to those that would be well acquainted with themselves, and would comfortably converse at home.

Direct. 1. Let him not overvalue or mind the deceitful world; that would have fruitful converse with God & with himself: Trust not such a cheater, as hath robbed so many thousands before us; especially when God and common experience do call out to us to take heed: The study of Riches, and rising, and reputation, and pleasures agreeth not with this study of God, and of our hearts: And though the world will not take acquaint-

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tance with us, if we come not in their fashion, nor see us, if we stand not on the higher ground; yet it is much better to be unknown to others, than to our selves: Though they that live upon the trade, do thinke there is no fishing like the Sea, yet those that take it but on the by, will rather choose the smaller waters, where though the fish be less, yet few are drowned, and made a prey to the fish that they would have catched. A retirement therefore must be made, from the inordinate pursuit of worldly things, and the charms of honours, riches, and delights: And if some present loss do seem to follow, it is indeed no loss, which tendeth unto gain. He will catch no fish that will not lose his flie. Me thinks they that sincerely pray [Lead us not into temptation,] should not desire to have bolts and barrs between God and them, and to dwell where salvation is hardliest attained! Desire not to be planted in any such place, (though it seem a Paradise,) where God is most unknown, and used as a stranger, and where Saints are wonders, and examples of serious piety are most rare, and where a Heavenly Conversation is known but by reports, and reported of according to the malice of the Serpent, and represented but as fancie, hypocrisie or faction:

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faction : where sin most prospereth, and is in least disgrace ; and where it is a greater shame to be a Saint than to be a swine ; a serious Christian, than a seared stupified sensualist : Bless you from that place where the weeds of vice are so rank, as that no good plant can prosper neer them : Where gain is Godliness ; and impiety is necessary to acceptable observance ; and a tender Conscience, and the fear of God, are characters of one too surly and unplyable to be countenanced by men ; where the tongue that nature formed to be the Index of the mind, is made the chiefest instrument to hide it ; and men are so conscious of their own incredibility, that no one doth believe or trust another : where no words are Heart-deep, but those that are spoken Against Christs cause and interest, or for their own ; where a vile person is honoured, and those contemned that fear the Lord : Bless you from the place where truth is intollerable, and untruth cloaked with its name : where holiness is lookt at as an Owle or enemy, and yet hypocrisie must steal its honour from it : where he is a Saint that is less wicked than infamous transgressors ; and where Dives life is blameless temperance ; and where Pride, Idleness, Fulness of bread, and filthy fornication and lasciviousness, are

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the infirmities of Pious and excellent persons: where great sins are small ones, and small ones are none; and where the greatest must have no reproof, and the Physicion is taken for the greatest enemy: where chaffe is valued at the price of wheat, and yet the famine is of choice: where persons and things are measured by Interest; and duty to God derided as folly, when ever it crosseth the wisdom of the world, and hated as some hurtful thing when it crosseth fleshy men in their desires: And where Dives Brethren are unwarned; and none are more secure and frolick, than those that to morrow may be in Hell; and as at the Gladiators Sports, none complain less than those that speed worst, quia cæsi silent, spectatores vociferantur. Old Travellers are usually most addièted to end their days in solitude; Learn to contemn the world at cheaper rates than they; Neither hope, ner wish to live an Alexander, and die a Socrates; A Crowd or concourse, though of the greatest, where is the greatest tumult of affairs, and confluence of temptations, is not the safest place to die in: and I have most mind to live where I would die. Where men are Barbari moribus, etsi non natione; Christians in Name, and infidels in Conversation: the sweetness of their Christian names will

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will not preserve them or you from the danger of their unchristian lives : It was not the whole of Lots deliverance to be saved from the flames of Sodom, but it was much of it to be freed from their malicious rage, and filthy grievous conversations : The best medicine against the Plague, is to keep far enough from the place that hath it. The Proverb saith, He shall have fleas that will lye with the dogs. Desire not that condition, where all seem friends, but none are friends indeed ; but they that seem to be your servants, are by flattery serving themselves upon you : Where few persons or things are truly represented ; but men are judged of by the descriptions of their enemies, and the Lambs have the skins and names of Wolves : and the best are odious when bold calumniators load them with odious accusations. In a word, desire not the place, where the more men seek, the less they find, and the more they find, the less they have : and the more they have, the less they do enjoy : Where the more are their provisions, the less are their supplies : the more their wealth, the more their want : the more thier pleasure, the less their Peace : the greater their Mirth, the less their Joy : the greater their confidence, the less their safety : Where the great Mistake about their Happiness, their Best, their

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their End, doth make their lives a constant error, and death a dolefull disappointment : He must needs lie crooked that hath so short a bed.

Direct. 2. Keep all clean and sound within ; that there may be little of loathsomeness to disaffect you, or terror to frighten you from your selves ; It is a frightfull thing to be much conversing with a guilty soul, and hearing the accusations of a conscience not cleansed by the blood of Christ : And it is an unpleasant thing to be searching in our wounds, and reading the history of a life of folly ; especially of wilful sin, and of ungrateful neglect of offered grace. Make not such work for your self, if you love it not. We make our beds ill, and then we are weary of them, because they are so hard : Our Comforts are more in our own hands then in any others : The best friend or Pastor cannot do so much to promote them, nor the greatest enemy so much to destroy them as our selves. If we will surfet, and make our selves sick, we must endure it. If Wasps and Vipers be our guests, no wonder if we dwell not quietly at home ; and if we sit not at ease, when we carry thorns about us. Folly and Concupiscence breed our misery : It is the smock of our own corruptions that troubleth our eyes,
and

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and the scent & smart of our ulcerated minds that most annoyeth us. We cannot waste our Peace, and have it. Turk and Pope, and all the terrible names on earth, are not so terrible deservedly to a sinner as his own: The nearest evil is the most hurtful evil: If a scolding Wife be such a continual dropping, and troublesome companion, as Solomon tells us, what then is a distempered, troubled mind, and a chiding conscience? It is pitty that man should be his own afflicter, but so it is: And, as the proverb is, he hath great need of a fool, that will play the fool himself; so I may say, He hath great need of a tormenter, that will be a tormenter to himself. Folly, and lust, and rashness, and passion are sorry keepers of our peace: Darkness and filth do make a dungeon, and not a delightful habitation of our hearts: God would take pleasure in them, if we kept them clean; and would walk with us in those gardens, if we kept them drest: But if we will defile his Temple, and make it displeasing unto him, he will make it displeasing unto us. Terror and trouble are the shadow of sin, that follow it, though the Sun shine never so brightly. If we carry fire in our cloaths, we shall smell it at the least. Keep close to God: obey his will: make sure of your Reconciliation and Adoption:

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tion : keep clear your Evidences: and grieve not the holy Spirit which sealeth you, and must comfort you: And then it will do you good to look into your heart, and there you shall find the most delightful company; and the Spirit that you have there entertained, will there entertain you with his joyes.

But if disorder have prevailed and made your Hearts a place of trouble, yet fly not from it, and refuse not to converse with it: For though it be not at the present a work of pleasure, it is a work of Necessity, and may tend to pleasure in the end: Conversing wisely and faithfully with a disordered troubled heart, is the way to make it a well ordered and quiet heart.

Direct. 3. In judging of your present state and actions, let one eye be alwayes on the end: This will both quicken you to be serious in the duty, and direct you in all particular cases to judge aright. As the approach of death doth convince almost all men of the necessity of studying themselves, and calleth them to it from all other studies; so the considerate foresight of it, would do the like in better time. And it is the End that communiceth the Good or Evil to all things in the way: and therefore as they have relation to the End, they

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they must be judged of. When you peruse your actions, consider them as done by one that is entering into Eternity, and as those that must all be opened in a clearer light. If we separate our actions in our considerations from their ends, they are not of the same signification, but taken to be other things than indeed they are. If the Oaths, the Lies, the Slanders, the Sensuality and filthiness of impure sinners, had not relation to the loss of Heaven, and to the pains of Hell, they were not matters of that exceeding moment as now they are: And if the Holiness, Obedience and Watchfulness of believers, had no relation to the escaping of Hell fire, and the attainment of eternal life, they would be of lower value than they are. The more clearly men discern that God is present, that judgement is at hand, that they are near to Heaven or Hell, where millions have already received their reward, the more seriously will they study, and the better will they know themselves.

Direct. 4. Though you must endeavour to judge your self truly as you are, yet rather encline to think meanly, than highly of your self, and be rather too suspicious, than too presumptuous. My reasons for this direction are, Because mans nature is generally disposed to self-exalting; and pride, and self-

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self-love are sins so common and so strong, as that it is a thing of wondrous difficulty to overcome them, so far as to judge our selves impartially, and to err as little in our own cause, as if it were anothers: and because self-exalting hath far more dangerous effects, then self-abasing, supposing them to exceed their bounds. Prudent humility is a quieting grace, and avoideth many storms and tempests, which trouble and shake the peace of others. It maketh men thankfull for that little as undeserved, which others repine at as short of their expectations: It telleth the sufferer that God doth afflict him much less then he deserveth: and causeth him to say, I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him (Micah 7. 9.) It teacheth us a cautelous suspicion of our own understandings, and a just submission to those that are wiser than ourselves: When Pride keepeth out Wisdom, by keeping out the knowledge of our ignorance. And as Pliny tells us of some Nations, where they are grey-headed in their Infancy, and black-headed when they are old; So Pride maketh many wise so soon, that they never come to be truly wise: They think in youth that they have more than the wisdom of age, and therefore in age they have less then what be-
seemed

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seemed them in youth. Every hard report or usage is ready to break a proud mans heart : when contempt doth little disquiet the humble, because they judge so meanly of themselves. The proud are frequently disturbed, because they climb into the seats of others : when humility sits quietly, and no one bids it rise, because it knoweth and keepeth its own place. Therefore it is that true contrition having once told us of our folly to the Heart, doth make us walk more circumspectly while we live : And that no man is better resolved then he that was once in doubt, and that no man standeth faster, than he that hath had a fall : and no man is more safe, then he that hath had most assaults. If you love your safety, desire not either to be, or to seem too high. Be little in your own eyes, and be content to be so in the eyes of others. As for worldly Greatness, affect neither the thing, nor the reputation of it : Look up if you please, to the tops of Steeples, Masts and Mountains : but stand below if you would be safe. Though the Chimney be the highest part of the house ; it is not the cleanest or the sweetest part : it is scorcht more with the fire, and suffocated with the smoke than other parts. And for spiritual endowments, desire them, and improve them : but desire not

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inordinately the reputation of them : It seldom increaseth a mans Humility, to be reputed Humble : And though Humility help you to bear applause, yet the remnants of pride are ready to take fire, and other sins to get advantage by it.

Direct. 5. Improve your self-acquaintance to a due apprehension of what is most suitable, most profitable, and necessary for you, and what is most hurtfull, unsuitable and unnecessary. He that hath taken a just measure of himself, is the better able to judge of all things else. How suitable will Christ and grace appear, and how unsuitable will worldly pomp appear, to one that truly knows himself ? How suitable will serious fervent worship appear, and how unsuitable the ludicrous shews of Hypocrites ? And one pair of eyes will be valued above many pair of spectacles ; and one pair of legs before two pair of crutches, by one that is not a stranger to himself. He that takes grass and provender to be his best and most delightful food, hath sure forgotten that he is a man, and taketh himself to be but a beast, or else he would not choose the food of a beast, nor use himself as a beast. If a man knew aright the capacity and tendency of the Reasonable nature, and the evil of sin, and the necessity
and

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and distress of an unrenewed soul, What sweet, What longing thoughts would he have of God, and all that tendeth to the pleasing and enjoying of him? How little would he think himself concerned in the trivial matters of honour or dishonour, riches or poverty, favour or displeasure, further than as they help or hinder him in the things that are of more regard? Know your self, and you will know what to Love, and what to hate; what to choose, and what to refuse; What to hold, and what to lose; what to esteem, and what to slight; what to fear, and when to be courageous and secure: the curing the dotage thus, would cure the night-walks of the dreaming, vagrant world: And they that find that musick cureth not the Stone or Gout, would know that mirth, and gallantry, and vain-glory, are no preservatives from Hell, nor sufficient cure for a guilty soul: And that if an aking head must have a better remedy than a golden Crown, and a deaseased body, a more suitable cure than a silken suit, a diseased soul doth call for more.

Direct. 6. Value not your self by mutable Accidents, but by the essence and substance of Christianity. A mans life consisteth not in the abundance which he possesseth, *Luke 12. 15.* Paul knew better what

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he said, when he accounted all but loss and dung for the knowledge and fruition of Jesus Christ (Phil. 3. 7, 8.) then they that dote on it as their felicity: And is a man to be valued, applauded, and magnified for his dung, or for his personal endowments? Is that your perfume, that stinketh in the nostrils of men of sounder senses? Judge not of the person by his apparel, when the foolishest and the worst may wear the same: The Master and inhabitants honour the house more than the house doth the Master and inhabitants. All the wit and learning in the world, with all the Riches, Honour and applause, yea and all the civility and winning deportment, will not make a Christian of an Infidel or Atheist, nor a happy of a miserable man; As nothing will make a man honourable indeed, that hath not the use of Reason, which differenceth men from bruits; so nothing will make or prove him holy or happy or safe, that hath not the Holy Image of God, which must difference his children from his enemies: If he be unsanctified, and be not a new creature, and have not the spirit of Christ within him, he is an Atheist, or Infidel, or an ungodly wretch, let him be never so rich, or great, or honourable. And as a harlot is never beautiful

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tisfull in the eyes of the wise and chaste, so a wicked man is never happy in the eyes of any but his phrenetick society.

Direct. 7. Think not that a few seldom hasty thoughts will bring and keep you in acquaintance with your self. It must be diligent observation, and serious consideration that must accomplish this. Many a man walketh where he doth not dwell. A transient salute is not a sign of intimate familiarity. It is enough sometime to step into your neighbours house for a charitable visit; but you must dwell in your own; Be more busie and censorious at home then the proud and the malicious are abroad: and be as seldom and tender in censuring others as such Hypocrites are in censuring themselves. Put on your spectacles at home, when you are reading over the Register of your consciences; but wear them not as you walk the streets; but take up with so much knowledge of ordinary passengers as you can have without them. Think not that you are unconcerned in the danger or safety of your neighbour, but remember that you are more concerned in your own. Its here most reasonable to say, that charity begins at home, when self-neglect will disable you to help another. And if sometimes your falls or frailty do find you matter for

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purging, griping, troublesome thoughts, and interrupt your sweeter, comfortable meditations, refuse not the trouble when you have made it necessary: Its many a sad and serious thought that the Ministers of Christ have for the cure and safety of their flocks: and should not the people have as serious thoughts for themselves? None foul their hands (saith the Proverb) about their own work: They that bring in the filth, should not refuse to sweep it out. We must not cast all the foul and troublesome work upon our Nurses, as long as we can help our selves. Your Reason, your Wisdom, care and diligence, are more your Own than any ones else; and therefore should be more used for your self, then for any. And if after much thoughtfulness, and labour, you find your heart to be no whit better, yet Labour and Believe. It is not the last blow of the axe alone, that cuts down the Tree, though it fall not till the last: The growth of Grace, as of plants and fruits, and flowers, is not perceived by immediate inspection. There is much good obtained when we discern it not: And nothing is more certain, than that honest diligence is never lost in the things of God and our salvation. It is worth all our labour, if we grow no better, to keep our spark from
going

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going out, and to see that we grow no worse :
And the preventing of Evil, is here an excellent Good. Many a thousand eat and drink, that never hope to grow any fatter or stronger than they are : It is not nothing to be sustained for our daily work, and to have our oyl renewed daily as it wasteth. The mill gets by going, saith the Proverb, though it stir not from the place. O keep the Heart with diligence, for out of it are the issues of life, Prov. 4. 23. Actions receive their specification and quality from the Heart. Death and Life are in the power of the tongue, Prov. 18. 21. but the tongue is in the power of the Heart.

Direct. 8. Let not your self-knowledge be meerly speculative, or affective, but also Practicall. Be not contented that you know what you are, and what you have done, nor that your Heart is much Affected with it : but let all tend to Action, to mend what is amiss, and to maintain, improve and increase what is good : and let the next question be, What am I now to do ? or What must I be for time to come ? It is a lamentable mistake of many that tire themselves with striving to make deep affecting impressions on their hearts, and when they have got much sorrow, or much joy, they think they have done

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the greatest matter, and there they stop : But Affections are the Spring that must move to Action ; and if you proceed not to your Duty, Affection is much lost ; And if with smaller Affection or passion you can stedfastly and resolutely cleave to God, and do your Duty, you have the principal thing, and are accepted : Not that outward Actions are accepted without the Heart ; but that there is most of the Heart, where there is most of the Examination and Will , though less of Passion : and there is most of Will, where there is most Endeavour : and inward Action is the first part of Obedience : And without these, no speculations will avail : However you find your Heart, be up and doing in the use of means, to make it better, and wait on God for further grace.

Direct. 9. Manage your self-acquaintance prudently, cautelously, and with the help of your skilfull friend or Pastor. Think not that it is a work that you need no Helper in. If you mistake in your Accounts , and put down a wrong summe , and call your self confidently what you are not, or deny Gods graces, when ever through Melancholy or distemper you cannot find them, and pass false conclusions against Gods mercies and your self, this were to turn a duty into a sin and snare.

And

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And you must do it seasonably: Melancholy persons are most incapable of it, who do nothing but pore upon themselves to little purpose: such must do more of other Duty, but lay by much of this till they are more capable, and make much use of the judgement of their Guides: And weaker Heads must take but a due proportion of time for self searching Meditations, lest they contract that troublesome disease: Duties must be used with profitable variety, and all done under good advice. But young persons, and those that are yet unconverted, have need to fall upon it without delay; and to follow it till they have made sure their calling and election, 2 Pet. 1. 10. O what a dreadfull thing it is, for a man to come rawly and newly to the study of his soul, as a thing that he is unacquainted with, when sickness is upon him, and death at hand, and he is ready to pass into another world! To be then newly to ask, What am I? and What have I done? and Whither am I going? and What will become of me for ever? is a most fearfull state of folly.

Direct. 10, Terminate not your knowledge ultimately in your self: but pass up unto God in Christ, and to the blessed priviledges of the Saints, and the joyfull state of Endless Glory, and there let your medita-

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tions be most frequent and most sweet: *But of this elsewhere.*

Madam, I have added these Directions not principally for you that have learnt the Art, but for your hopeful Sons and Daughters, who must be taught these things betimes, and for your friends who will be invited hither for your sake. They that know you not, will think I have taken too much liberty, and spoken too much both of you, and to you; But I appeal from such: They that know not how easily you can pardon any one, except your self, will aggravate the weaknesses which your charity will cover. I was purposely the longer because the Treatise is defective; And if one Kingdom do not hold us, and I should see your face no more on earth, yet till we meet in the Glorious Everlasting Kingdom, we shall have frequent converse by such means as these, notwithstanding our corporal distance: And as I am assured of a room in your frequent prayers, so I hope I shall remain,

Madam, Your faithfull Servant, and
Remembrancer at the Throne of
Grace,

August 25.

1661.

Richard Baxter.

Postscript.

Madam,

SINCE the writing of this Epistle, finding you under the afflicting hand of God, I thought meet to remember you of what you know, that God thus traineth up his children for their Rest : whom he Loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth : If we endure chastening, God dealeth with us as with children : and if we be without chastisement whereof all are partakers, then we are bastards and not sons, *Heb. 12. 6, 7, 8.* The same flesh that would be pleased, will grudge when it is displeased : and that which is our enticing enemy in prosperity, will be our disturbing enemy in adversity : As fleshly minds misjudge of the law and service of God, and cannot be subject because of the enmity against him, *Rem. 8 7.* so do they misjudge of his chastisements : And so far as they participate of this disease, the best will be repining, and tempted to unworthy thoughts of God. Even *innocent* nature is loth to suffer ; Christ himself saith, If it be

be thy will, let this cup pass from me : And nature so far as it is corrupted, is yet much more averse, because the Flesh is more inordinately desirous of its ease, and passion more turbulent when it is denyed, and the soul hath less apprehension and relish of that *Love of God*, which is the *cause* and *End*, and should sweeten all to a Reconciled well-composed mind : and it is also less *satisfied in the will of God*, and it is less *subject* to it : and patience is defective because of the weakness of the Graces that should support us. Besides which also, a tenderness of spirit, and overmuch sensibility, fears and trouble, are ordinary effects of the weak and tender nature of man, especially of the more weak and tender sex : And when all these concur (the averseness of the most innocent nature, the remnants of sin, and the special tenderness of your nature and sex,) your burden and tryal is much the greater, and your grief must needs be much the more. But, I beseech you, remember, that you have not to do with an Enemy, but a Father that knoweth what he doth, and meaneth you no hurt, but that which is the fittest means to your good, and to your scaping greater hurt ; that loveth you no less

less in the greatest of your pain and danger, than in the greatest of your prosperity and peace : that you have a Head in Heaven that was partaker with us of flesh and blood, that he might deliver us from our bondage which we are in through the fear of death, who was made perfect by suffering ; and is not ashamed to call us Brethren ; being in all things made like unto us, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for our sins : who in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted, *Heb. 2. 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18.* We have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted or tryed as we are, but without sin : He that himself in the days of his flesh, did offer up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears to him that was able to save him from death, (*Heb. 5. 7.*) will not be angry if his servants complain and cry to him in their suffering : He that cryed out, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me ! will pity his poor distressed members, and not forsake them, when they think themselves forsaken ; And if they

go beyond their bounds in their complainings, he will not therefore disregard their moans; But he that honoured the patience of *Job*, though he so passionately cursed the day of his birth, will love the faith and patience of his people, notwithstanding the mixtures of unbelief and impatience; He is ready with his gracious excuse, *Matth.* 26. 41. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak; And he considereth that our strength and flesh is not of stones or brass, *Job* 6. 12. He will therefore revive the spirit of the contrite, and will not contend for ever, nor be alwaies wroth, lest the spirit should faile before him, and the souls which he hath made, *Isai.* 57. 15, 16. And though no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: yet the end is that he may make us partakers of his Holiness; and afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby, *Heb.* 12. 10, 11. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the Crown of Life, which God hath promised to them that love him, *Jam.* 1. 12. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest O Lord, and teachest him out of thy Law, that thou mayest
give

give him rest from the days of adversity untill the pit be digged for the wicked; For the Lord will not Cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance, *Psal.* 94. 12, 13, 14.

Madam, if nothing in all the world be more certain, that that there is a God, who is true and just, and delighteth in his people when they are lowest in the world; If nothing be more sure than that there is a Heaven for persevering penitent believers: then are our Arguments for the comfort of Gods afflicted ones, no fancies, but fetcht as from the highest excellencies, so from the surest realities that ever were presented to the understanding of a man: And though the best of Saints have been put to wrestle with the temptations that arise from the adversity of Believers, and the prosperity of the wicked; yet this is still the result of all their perplexing thoughts; Truly God is good to *Israel*, even to such as are of a clean heart: Though sometime their feet are almost gone, and their paths do well nigh slip, and they are ready to say, We have cleansed our hearts in vain, and washed our hands in innocency; for all the day are we plagued, and chastened every morning; yet they soon learn in the sanctuary

sanctuary of God, that the wicked are set in slippery places, and cast down into destruction, and brought to desolation as in a moment, and utterly consumed with terrors; as a dream when one awaketh, so the Lord when he awaketh, will despise their image, *Psal.* 73. But marke the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the End of that man is peace, *Psal.* 37. 37. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil: But though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged: yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him, *Eccles.* 8. 11, 12. If not here, yet certainly at last all shall say, Verily there is a Reward for the righteous, *Psal.* 58. 11. Rest therefore in the Lord; and wait patiently for him: Commit your way to him: Trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass: For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever, *Psal.* 9. 18. How happy are you that God doth thus save you from the temptations of prosperity, which you see befool and undo so many before your eyes! and that you are not left in the number of those,

those, that are men of the world, which
have their portion in this life! *Psal.* 17. 14.
and are given up to their own hearts lusts,
to walk in their own counsels, *Psal.* 81. 12.
and must hear at last, Remember that thou
in thy life time receivedst thy good things]
but that here you have your evils, and
shall be comforted when the now-prospe-
rous wicked are tormented, *Luke* 16. 25.
If heaven be enough to make you a felicity,
and Eternity belong enough for your frui-
tion of it, then never think hardly of God
for any of his chastisements: *Lazarus* re-
penteth not there that he was poor: nor *Job*
that he was covered with sores, nor *David*
that he washed his couch with tears, and
that his sore ran and ceased not: The long-
est of our sorrows will there be reviewed
as short in respect of our endless joys;
and the sharpest of our pains as *nothing*
to those pleasures: *Madam*, experience
as well as faith assureth me, that it is good
for us that we are afflicted; And though
for the sake of others, I shall earnestly
beseech the Lord, that he will not unseaso-
nably remove such as you from this un-
worthy generation; yet I doubt not but
your removal, and sufferings in the way,
will advantage you for your Everlasting
Rest.

Rest. And for my self, I desire, that my lot may still fall with those that follow Christ through tribulation, bearing the cross, and crucified to the world, and waiting for his appearance, desiring to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord; & not with those that are fed as beasts for the slaughter, and prosper a while in their iniquity, till sudden destruction come upon them, and at last their sins do find them out, when the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God, *Psal. 9. 17. Numb. 32. 23. 1 Thes. 5. 3. Phil. 3. 19.* And that these words of life may be engraven upon my heart, [*Psal. 63. 3. Thy loving kindness is better than life*] *Psal. 73. 26. [My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever,]* *Rom. 8. 28. [All things work together for good to them that love God]* *Joh. 14. 19. Because I live, ye shall live also.*] *Col. 3. 3, 4. Our life is hid with Christ in God: When Christ who is our Life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in Glory:*] and that I may be fit for the Title of the Beloved Apostle, *Rev. 1. 9.* (though as a servant to you and the Church of God,)

*Your Brother and Companion in tribulation, and
in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ.*

Nov. 1. 1661.

Rich. Baxter.

my separation from you be very deep. And though to strangers it will seem probable that such severity had never been exercised against me, but for some heynous crime, yet to you that have known me, I shall need to say but little in my defence. The great crime which is openly charged on me, and for which I am thought unworthy to preach the Gospel, (even where there is no other to preach) is a matter that you are unacquainted with, and therefore, as you have heard me publickly accused of it, I am bound to render you such an account as is necessary to your just information and satisfaction.

It pleased the Kings Majesty, (in the prosecution of his most Christian resolution, of uniting his differing subjects by the way of mutual approaches and abatements) to grant a Commission to twelve Bishops and nine assistants on the one side, and to one Bishop and eleven other Divines and nine assistants on the other side, to treat about such alterations of the Liturgie, as are necessary to the *satisfying of tender consciences*, and to the *restoring of unity and peace*. My experiences in a former Treaty (for Reconciliation in matter of Discipline) made me intreat those to whom

whom the nomination on the one side was committed, to excuse me from the service which I knew would prove troublesome to my self, and ungrateful to others; but I could not prevail. (But the Work it self, I very much approved, as to be done by fitter and more acceptable persons.) Being commanded by the Kings Commission, I took it to be my duty to be faithful, and to plead for such Alterations as I knew were necessary to the assigned ends; thinking it to be treachery to his Majesty that entrusted us, and to the Church and cause for which we were entrusted, if under pretence of making such Alterations as were necessary to the two forementioned ends, I should have silently yielded to have [*No Alterations*] or [*next to none.*] In the conclusion (when the chief work was done by writing) a Committee of each part, was appointed to manage a Disputation in presence (by writing also.) Therein those of the other part formed an Argument, whose Major proposition was to this sense (for I have no copy) [*Whatsoever book enjoyneth nothing but what is of it self lawful, and by lawful authority, enjoyneth nothing that is sinful:*] We denyed this proposition; and at last gave divers Reasons

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of

of our denial ; among which one was
that [*It may be unlawful by Accident, and
therefore sinful*] You now know my
crime ; It is my concurring with learned,
reverend Brethren , to give *this Reason*
of our denial of a proposition : Yet *they*
are not forbidden to preach for it, (and I
hope shall not be ;) but only I. You
have publickly heard, from a mouth that
should speak nothing but the words of
Charity, Truth, and Soberness, (especially
there) that this was [*a desperate shift
that men at the last extremity are forced to*]
and inferring [*that then neither God nor
man can enjoy without sin.*] In City and
Country this foundeth forth to my re-
proach. I should take it for an act
of clemency to have been smitten pro-
fessedly for nothing , and that it might
not have been thought necessary to afflict
me by a defamation, that so I might seem
justly afflicted by a prohibition to preach
the Gospel. But indeed is there in these
words of ours so great a crime ? Though
we doubted not but they knew that our
Assertion made not *Every* evil accident, to
be such as made an Imposition unlawful,
yet we exprest this by word to them at
that time, for fear of being misreported :
and

and I told it to the Right Reverend Bishop when he forbade me to preach, and gave this as a reason: And I must confess I am still guilty of so much weakness, as to be confident that *some things not evil of themselves, may have Accidents so evil, as may make it a sin to him that shall command them.* Is this opinion inconsistent with all Government? Yea I must confess my self guilty of so much greater weakness, as that I thought I should never have found a man on earth, that had the ordinary reason of a man, that had made question of it; yea I shall say more then that which hath offended, viz. *that whenever the commanding or forbidding of a thing indifferent is like to occasion more hurt than good, and this may be foreseen, the commanding or forbidding it is a sin.* But yet this is not the Assertion that I am chargeable with, but that [*some Accidents there may be that may make the Imposition sinful;*] If I may ask it without accusing others, how would my crime have been denominated if I had said the contrary? Should I not have been judged unmeet to live in any Governed society? It is not unlawful of it self to command out a Navy to Sea: But if it were foreseen that

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they

they would fall into the enemies hands, or were like to perish by any accident, and the necessity of sending them were small, or none, it were a sin to send them. It is not of it self unlawful to sell poyson, or to give a knife to another, or to bid another do it : but if it were foreseen that they will be used to poyson or kill the buyer, it is unlawful ; and I think the Law would make him believe it that were guilty. It is not of it self unlawful to light a candle or set fire on a straw ; But if it may be foreknown, that by anothers negligence or wilfulness, it is like to set fire on the City, or to give fire to a train and store of Gunpowder, that is under the Parliament house, when the King and Parliament are there : I crave the Bishops pardon, for believing that it were sinfull to do it , or command it : Yea or not to hinder it (in any such case,) when *Qui non vetat peccare cum potest, jubet.* Yea though going to Gods publike worship be of it self so far from being a sin, as that it is a duty, yet I think it is a sin to command it to all in time of a raging pestilence, or when they should be defending the City against the assault of an enemy. It may rather be then a duty to prohibite it. I think *Paul* spake
not

not any thing inconsistent with the Government of God or man, when he bid both the Rulers and people of the Church, not to destroy him with their meat for whom Christ dyed : and when he saith that he hath not his Power to destruction, but to Edification. Yea there are Evil Accidents of a thing not evil of it self, that are caused by the Commander : and it is my opinion that they may prove his command unlawful.

But what need I use any other Instances then that which was the matter of our dispute ? Suppose it never so lawful of it self to kneel in the Reception of the Sacrament, if it be imposed by a penalty that is incomparably beyond the proportion of the offence, that penalty is an Accident of the command, and maketh it by accident sinful in the Commander : If a Prince should have Subjects so weak as that all of them thought it a sin against the example of Christ, and the Canons of the general Councils, and many hundred years practice of the Church to kneel in the act of Receiving on the Lords days, if he should make a Law that all should be put to death that would not kneel, when he foreknew that their consciences would command them all, or most of them, to die rather than

(c 4) obey,

obey, would any man deny this command to be unlawful by this accident ? Whether the penalty of ejecting Ministers that dare not put away all that kneel, and of casting out all the people that scruple it, from the Church, be too great for such a circumstance, (and so in the rest,) and whether this, with the lamentable state of many congregations, and the divisions that will follow, being all foreseen, do prove the Impositions unlawful which were then in question, is a case that I had then a clearer call to speak to, then I have now. Only I may say that the ejection of the servants of Christ from the Communion of his Church, and of his faithful Ministers from their sacred work, when too many Congregations have none but insufficient or scandalous teachers, or no preaching Ministers at all, will appear a matter of very great moment, in the day of our Accounts, and such as should not be done upon any but a Necessary cause, where the benefit is greater then this hurt (and all the rest) amounts to.

Having given you (to whom I owe it) this account of the cause for which I am forbidden the exercise of my ministry in that Countrey, I now direct these Sermons to
your

your hands, that seeing I cannot teach you as I would, I may teach you as I can. And if I much longer enjoy such liberty as this, it will be much above my expectation.

My dearly beloved, stand fast in the Lord ; And fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings : For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool : but the righteousness of the Lord shall be for ever, and his salvation from generation to generation, Isa. 51. 7, 8. If I have taught you any doctrine of error or impiety, of disobedience to your Governors in lawful things, of schism or uncharitableness, unlearn them all, and renounce them with penitent detestation : But if otherwise, I beseech you mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them : For they are such as serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly ; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple, Rom. 16. 17. If any shall speak against Truth or Godliness, remember what you have received ; and how little any adversary could say, that ever made such assaults upon you, while I was with you : and that it is easie for any
man

man to talk confidently when no man must contradict him. I denyed no man liberty upon equal terms, to have said his worst against any doctrine that ever I taught you. And how they succeeded, I need not tell you : your own stability tells the world. As you have maintained true Catholicism, and never followed any sect, so I beseech you still maintain the ancient faith, the Love of every member of Christ, and common charity to all, your Loyalty to your King, your peace with all men : And let none draw you from Catholick Unity to a faction, though the declaiming against Faction and Schism should be the device by which they would accomplish it. And as the world is *nothing*, and God is *all*, to all that are sincere believers ; so let no worldly interest seem regardable to you, when it stands in any opposition to Christ ; but account all *loss* and *dung* for him, *Phil.* 3.8. And if you shall hear that I yet suffer more than I have done, let it not be your discouragement or grief ; For I doubt not but it will be my crown and joy : I have found no small consolation, that I have not suffered, for sinful, or for small and indifferent things : And if my pleading against
the

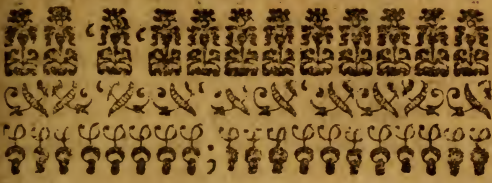
the ejection of the Ministers of Christ,
and the excommunicating of his member,
for a ceremony, and the divisions of his
Church, and the destruction of Charity
shall be the cause of my suffering (be it
never so great,) it shall as much rejoyce
me to be a suffering witness for CHARI-
TY and UNITY, as if I were a Mar-
tyr for the Faith. I participate with *Paul*
in an expectation and hope, that Christ shall
be magnified in my body whether by life or
death: and as to live will be Christ, so to
die will be gain; Only let your conversation
be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ; that
whether I ever see you more, or be absent
(till the joyful day) I may hear of your
affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with
one mind striving together for the faith of
the Gospel; and in nothing terrified by your
adversaries, which is to them an evident
token of perdition, but to you of salvation,
and that of God; if to you it shall be given
on the behalf of Christ, not only to
believe on him, but also to suffer for his
sake, Phil. I. 20, 21, 27, 28, 29. But let
no injury from inferiors provoke
you to dishonour the Governors that
God himself hath set over you. Be meek
and patient; the Lord is at hand; Honour
all

*all men; Love the Brotherhood: Fear God;
Honour the King: For so is the Will of
God, that with well doing ye may put to
silence the ignorance of foolish men, 1 Pet.
2. 15, 17. It is soon enough for you and
me, to be justified at the bar of Christ (by
himself that hath undertaken it) against
all the Calumnies of malicious men. Till
then let it seem no greater a matter then
indeed it is, to be slandered, vilified or
abused by the world. Keep close to him
that never faileth you, and maintain your
integrity, that he may maintain the joys
that none can take from you. Farewel my
dear brethren, who are my glory and joy in
the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at
his coming (1 Thes. 2. 18, 19.)*


*Your faithful, though unwor-
thy Pastor,*

Nov. 11. 1661.

Rich. Baxter.



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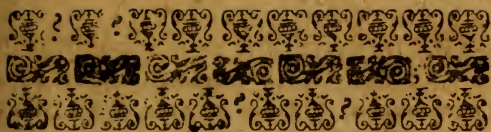
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THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF LONDON
FROM THE FOUNDATION
TO THE PRESENT
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ERRATA.

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THE
Mischief of *Self-ignorance*,
AND
Benefit of *Self-acquaintance*.

2 COR. 13. 5.

Know ye not your own selves — ?]



HE Corinthians being much abused by *false-teachers*, to the *corrupting* of their *faith* and *manners*, and the *questi-ning* of the *Apostles Ministry*, he acquainteth them in my Text with an obvious remedy for both these maladies ; and lets them know , that their miscarriages call them to question *themselves* , rather then to question *his authority or gifts*, and that

B

it

The Mischief of Self-ignorance,

if they find *Christ* in themselves, they must acknowledge him in his ministry.

He therefore first most importunately urgeth them to the mediate duty of *Self-examination*: [*Examine your selves, Whether you be in the faith : Prove your own selves :*] *Self-examination* is but the *Means* of *Self-knowledge*: This therefore he next urgeth, and that first in *General* ; and this by way of *Interrogation*, [*Know ye not your own selves?*] and then more particularly he tells them, *what it is of themselves*, that it most concerneth them to know, [*How that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be Reprobates.*] As if he should say, [*Alas, poor souls; you have more cause to question your selves then me : Go too therefore, examine and prove your selves. It is a shame for a man to be ignorant of himself. Know ye not your own selves? Either Christ is in you, by faith, and by his Spirit, or he is not. If he be not, you are yet but Reprobates, that is, disapproved of God, and at present in a forsaken, or condemned state your selves ;* (which is a conclusion that you will be loath to admit, but more concerneth you :) If Christ be in you, it was by the means of my ministry ; and therefore that ministry hath been powerfull and effectual to you ; and you

you are my witnesses ; the seal of my ministry is *upon your own* souls ; Christ within you, bears me witness, and therefore of all men, you have least cause to question or quarrel with my ministry.]

This Paraphrase opening all that may seem difficult in the Text, I shall immediately offer you a double Observation, which the words afford us ; first, as considered in themselves, and then as respecting the inference for which they are premised by the Apostle.

The first is, that [*All men should know themselves : or, It is a shame for a man to be unacquainted with himself.*]

The second is, that [*Not knowing our selves is the cause of other errors : or, The knowledge of our selves, would much conduce to the Cure of many other errors.*]

In handling this, I shall shew you, 1. What it is to know our selves. 2. How far it is, or is not, a shame to be ignorant of our selves. 3. What evils follow this Ignorance of our selves, and what benefits self-knowledge would procure. 4. How we should improve this doctrine by Application and Practice. Of the first but briefly.

I. *Self-knowledge* is thus distinguished according to the object. 1. There is a *Physical self knowledge*: when a man knows what he is as a *man*; What his soul is, and what his body, and what the compound called *man*. The Doctrine of *Mans Nature*, or this part of *Physicks*, is so necessary to all, that it is first laid down even in the Holy Scriptures, in *Gen. ch. 1, 2, 3.* before his Duty is expressed. And it is presupposed in all the moral passages of the word, and in all the preaching of the gospel; The *Subject* is presupposed to the *Adjuncts*. The *Subjects* of Gods Kingdom belong to the *Constitution*; and therefore to be known before the Legislation, and Judgement, which are the parts of the Administration. Morality alway presupposeth nature. The *Species* is in order before the separable *Accidents*. Most ridiculously therefore doth Ignorance plead for it self against Knowledge, in them that cry down *this part of Physicks*, as *Humane Learning*, unnecessary to the Disciples of Christ. What excellent holy Meditations of *Humane nature* do you find oft in *Job* and in *Dauids Psalms*, *Ps. 139.* concluding in the

the praise of the incomprehensible Creator, ver. 14. [*I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made : Marvellous are thy works ; and that my soul knoweth right well.]*

2. There is a *Moral Self-knowledge*, very necessary. And this is, The knowing of our selves in Relation to *Gods Law*; or to his Judgement. The former is the knowledge of our selves in respect of our *Duty*: the second, in respect of the *Reward* or *Punishment*. And both of them have respect to the *Law of Nature*, and *Works*, or to the *Remedying Law of Grace*.

The *Ethical* knowledge of our selves, or that which respecteth the *Precept* and our *Duty*, is twofold: The first is, as we have performed that *Duty*; The second, as we have violated the *Law* by non-performance or transgression: The first is, the knowledge of our selves as *Good*; the second as *Evil*. And both are either the knowledge of our *Habits* (good or evil) or of our *Acts*; How we are *Morally*, *Inclined*, disposed, or habituated; or what, and how we have *Done*; We must know the *Good estate* of our *Nature* that we were created in; the *Bad estate* of sinfull nature that we are fallen into; the actual sin committed

against the Law of nature; and what sin we have committed against the Law of Grace: and whether we have obeyed the call of the Gospel of salvation, or not. So that as mans state considered Ethically, is three-fold, *Institutus, Destitutus, & Restitutus: Infirmatus, Deformatus, & Reformatus*; the state of Upright nature; the State of Sin, Original and Actual; and the state of Grace; we must know what we are in respect to every one of these.

And as to the *Judicial* knowledge of our selves, that is, as we stand related to the Promises, and Threatnings, the Judgement, the Reward, and Punishment; we must know first, what is *due to us* according to the *Law of Nature*, and then what is *due to us* according to the tenour of the *Law of Grace*. By the *Law of Nature* or of *Works*, *Death* is the *Due* of fallen mankind; but no man *by it* can lay claim to *Heaven*. All men are under *its curse* or *condemnation*, till *pardoned by Christ*; but no man can be *Justified by it*. By the *Promise of the Gospel*, all *true Believers* renewed and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, are *Justified*, and made the *sons of God*, and *heirs of everlasting glory*. To know whether we are yet *delivered from the condemnation of the Law*;

Law ; and whether our *sins* are pardoned or not ; and whether we are the children of God, and have any part in the Heavenly Glory ; is much of the *self-knowledge* that is here intended in the Text , and that which most nearly concerneth the solid comfort of our souls.

II. **B**UT is all self-ignorance a shame, or dangerous? *Answ.* 1. It is no other shame then what is common to humane frailty, to be ignorant of much of the mystery of our *Natural Generation, Constitution, Integrall parts, and Temperament*. There is not a *nerve*, or *artery*, or *vein*, nor the bredth of a hand from head to foot, but hath *something unknown* to the most excellent Philosopher on Earth. This little world called *Man*, is a compound of wonders. Both *Soul* and *Body* have afforded matter of endless controversie, and voluminous Disputations, to the most Learned men; which will not admit of a full decision, till we are past this state of darkness and mortality.

2. There are many *Controversies* about the *nature, derivation and punishment of Original sin*, which a humble and diligent Christian

Christian may possibly be ignorant of.

3. The *degrees of Habitual sin*, considered *simply*, or *proportionably* and *respectively* to each other, may be much unknown to many that are willing and diligent to know: And so may divers *actual sins*; such as *we know not to be sin*, through our imperfect understanding of the *Law*; and such as through frailty in a crowd of actions, *escape our particular observation*. And the *sinfulness* or *Aggravations* of every sin are but imperfectly known and observed by the best.

4. The *Nature and beauty of the Image of God*, as *first planted on created man*, and since *Restored to man Redeemed*: the *manner of the Spirits access, operation, testimony and inhabitation*; are all but imperfectly known by the wisest of Believers.

The *frame* or admirable *composure* or *contexture* of the *New-man* in each of the renewed faculties; the *connexion, order, beauty and special use* of each particular *grace*, are observed but imperfectly by the best.

5. The very *uprightness and sincerity* of our *own hearts*, in Faith, Hope, Love, Repentance and Obedience, is *usually unknown* to *Incipients*, or *young beginners* in Religion;

on; and to the *weaker sort of Christians*, how old soever in profession, and to *melancholy persons*, who can have no thoughts of themselves but sad and fearfull, tending to despair; and to *lapsed and declining Christians*; and also to *many an upright soul*, from whom in some *cases of special tryal*, God seems to hide his pleased face. And though these *infirmities* are their *shame*, yet are they not the *Characters* or *Prognosticks* of their misery, and *everlasting shame*.

6. The *same* persons must needs be unacquainted with their *Justification*, *Reconciliation*, *Adoption*, and *Title* to everlasting blessedness, as long as they are uncertain of their *sincerity*. Yea, though they uprightly examine themselves, and desire help of their Guides, and watch and pore continually upon their hearts and wayes, and daily beg of God to acquaint them with their spiritual condition, they may yet be so far unacquainted with it, as to pass an unrighteous judgement on themselves, and condemn themselves when God hath justified them.

But 1. To be *totally ignorant* of the excellency and capacity of your *immortal souls*; 2. To be void of an *effectual knowledge*

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ledge of your *sin* and *miser*y, and need of the Remedy; 3. To think you *have saving grace*, when you *have none*; that you are *regenerate by the Spirit*, when you are only *sacramentally regenerate by Baptism*; that you are *the members of Christ*, when it is no such matter; that you are *Justified, Adopted*, and the *Heirs of Heaven*, when it is *not so*; all this is *dolefull* and *damnable unacquaintedness* with yourselves.

To be unacquainted with a *state of Life*, when you are in such a state, is *sad* and *troublesome*, and casts you upon many and great *inconveniencies*. But to be unacquainted with a *state of Death*, when you are in it, doth fasten your chains, and hinder your recovery. To be *willing* and *diligent* to *know your state*, and yet be *unable* to attain to assurance and satisfaction, is ordinary with many true Believers: But to be *ignorant* of it, because you *have no grace to find*, and because you *mind not* the matters of your souls, or think it not worth your diligent consideration or enquiry, this is the case of the miserable despisers of salvation.

III. **T**HE *Commodities* and *Incommo-*
dities to be mentioned, are so
 many and great, that many hours would
 not serve to open them as they deserve.

I. *Atheism is cherished by self-ignorance.*
 The knowledge of *our selves as men* doth
 notably conduce to our knowledge of God.
 Here God is known but *darkly*, and *as in*
a glass, 1 Cor. 13. 12. and by his *Image*;
 and not as *face to face*. And, except his *In-*
caruate and his *written word*, what *Glass* re-
 vealeth him so clearly as the soul of man?
 We bear a *double Image* of our Maker:
 His *Natural Image* in the nature of our
faculties; and his *Moral Image* in their
Holy qualifications, in the nature of grace,
 and frame of the new man. By *knowing our*
selves it is easie to know, *that there is a God*;
 and it *much assisteth* us to know, *what he is*,
 not only in his *Attributes* and *Relations*,
 but even in the *Trinity* it self. He may easily
 know that there is a *Primitive Being and*
Life, that knoweth he hath himself a *De-*
rived Being and Life. He *must know* that
 there is a *Creator*, that knoweth he is a
creature. He that findeth a *capacious In-*
tellect, a *Will*, and *Power* in the creature, and
 that

that is conscious of any *Wisdom*, and *Goodness* in himself, may well know that *formaliter* or *eminenter* all these are infinite in the *first cause* that *must* thus have in it self whatsoever it doth communicate. He that knoweth that he *made not*, and *preserveth not himself*, may well know that he is *not his Own*, but *his* that made him and preserveth him, who must needs be his *Absolute Proprietary and Lord*. He that knoweth that he is an *Intellectual free agent*, and therefore to act *Morally*, and therefore to be moved by *Moral means*, and that he is a *sociable creature*, a *member of the Universe*, living among men, may well be sure, that he is *made to be a subject*, and *Governed by Laws*, and by *morall means* to be directed and moved to his *End*: and therefore that none but his *Absolute Lord*, the *Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Power*, can be his *Absolute and Highest Sovereign*. He that is convinced that *he is*, *he lives*, *he hopeth* and *enjoyeth all thats good*, from a *Superior Bounty*, may be sure that *God* is his *Principal Benefactor*. And to be [*The First and Infinite Being, Intellect, Will, and Power, Wisdom, Goodness, and Cause of all things; the Absolute Owner, the most Righteous Governor, and the most Bounteous Benefactor,*]

refactor,] this is to be [*G O D.*] This being the *Description* of him that is *so called*: such a Description as is fetcht from his *Created Image* [*Man,*] and expressed in the terms that *himself* hath *chosen*, and *used* in his *word*, as knowing that if he will be understood *by man*, he must use the Notions and Expressions of *man*: And though these are spoken but *Analogically* of *God*, yet are there *no fitter* conceptions of him that the soul of man in flesh is capable of. So that the Atheist carrieth about him that Impress and Evidence of the Deity, which may convince him, or condemn him for his Foolishness and Impiety. He is a *Fool* indeed, that *saith in his Heart, There is no God* (Psal. 14. 1.) when *that Heart* it self in its *Being*, and *Life*, and *Motion* is his *Witness*: and *Soul* and *Body* with all their faculties, are nothing but the *Effects* of this *Almighty Cause*: And when they prove that *there is a God*, even by *questioning* or *denying* it; being unable *without* him so much as to *deny* him, that is, to *think*, or *speak*, or *be*. As if a fool should write a Volume to prove that *there is no Ink or Paper in the world*; when it is *Ink and Paper* by which he writes.

And

And whether there be no representation of the *Trinity in Unity* in the *Nature of man*, let them judge that have well considered, how in *One Body* there are the *Natural, Vital and Animal* parts, and *Spirits*: And in *One Life or Soul*, there are the *Vegetative, Sensitive and Rational* faculties; And in *One Rational Soul as such*, there are an *Intellect, Will, and Executive power*, Morally perfected by *Wisdom, Goodness and Promptitude* to well doing. As in one *Sun* there is *Light and Heat*, and *Moving force*. So that *man* is both the *Beholder and the Glass*; the *Reader and the Book*: He is the *Index* of the *Godhead to himself*: Yea, partly of the *Trinity in Unity*: Of which saith *August. de Trinit. lib. 1.* [*Nec periculosius alicubi erratur, nec laboriosius aliquid queritur, nec fructuosius invenitur, quam Trinitas.* We need not say, *Who shall go up into Heaven*: saith *Seneca* himself by the light of nature, *Prope Deus est; tecum est: Intus est; sacer intra nos Spiritus; sed & bonorum malorumq; nostrorum observator & custos: Hic prout à nobis tractatur, ita nos tractat ipse: Bonus vir sine Deo nemo est.*] *God is nigh us; with us; within us; A holy spirit resideth within us;*
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the observer of our evil and good, and our preserver: He useth us as he is used by us: no good man is without God.] saith August. [*Deus est in seipso sicut a & ω: in mundo sicut rector & author: in Angelis sicut sapor & decor: in Ecclesia sicut paterfamilias in domo: in animo sicut sponsus in thalamo: in iustis, sicut adiutor & protector: in reprobis, sicut pavor & horror.*] God is in himself as the Alpha and Omega; in the world as its Governor and Author: in Angels as their sweetness and comeliness: in the Church as the master of the family in his house: in the soul, as the Bridegroom in his bed-chamber: in the righteous, as their helper and protector, &c.] And as all declareth him, so all should praise him: *Hunc itaq; mens diligat, lingua canat, manus scribat atq; in his sanctis studiis fidelis animus se exerceat.* Aug.] Let the mind be exercised in loving him, the tongue in singing him, the hand in writing him; let these holy studies be the believers work.]

2. He that knoweth himself, may certainly know, that there is another life of Happiness or Misery for man to live, when this is ended. For he must needs know that his soul is capable of a spiritual and glorious felicity with God, and of immaterial objects
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and that *time* is as *nothing* to it, and transitory creatures afford it no satisfaction or Rest: and that the *Hopes* and *Fears* of the *Life* to come, are the *Divine engines* by which the *Moral Government* of the world is carried on; and that the very *nature* of *man* is such, as that without such *Apprehensions*, *Hopes* and *Fears*, he could not in a *connaturall way* be *Governed*, and brought unto the End to which his *Nature* is enclined and adapted; But the world would be as a *Wilderness*, and *men* as *bruits*. And he may well know that God made not such faculties *in vain*, nor suited them to an end which cannot be attained, nor to a work which would prove but their trouble and deceit: He may be sure that a meer *probability* or *possibility* of an *everlasting Life*, should engage a *reasonable creature* in all possible diligence in *Piety* & *Righteousness* & *Charity* to attain it: And so *Religious* and *holy endeavours*, are become the *duty* of *man as man*; there being few such *Infidels* or *Atheists* to be found on earth, as dare say, *They are sure there's no other life for man*. And doubtless *whatsoever* is by *Nature* and *Reason* made *mans Duty*, is not *delusory* and *vain*: Nor is it *Reasonable* to think that *Falshood*, *frustration* and *deceit*, are the ordinary

ordinary way by which *mankind is Governed* by the *most wise and Holy God*. So that the *end* of man may be clearly gathered from his *Nature*: forasmuch as God doth Certainly suit his workes unto their proper use and ends. It is therefore the *ignorance of our selves* that makes men question the *Immortality of soules*: And I may adde, it is the *Ignorance of the nature of Conscience*, and of *all Morality*, and of the *reason of Justice among men*, that makes men doubt of the *discriminating Justice of the Lord*, which is *hereafter* to be manifested.

3. Did *men know themselves*, they would better know the *evill and odiousness of sin*. As *poverty and sickness* are better known by *feeling* then by *hearesay*: so also is *sin*. To hear a discourse or read a Booke of the *Nature, Prognosticks and Cure of the plague, consumption, or dropsie*, doth little affect us, while we seem to be sound and safe our selves: But when we find the *maladie* in our *flesh*, and perceive the danger, we have then another manner of knowledge of it. Did you but *see and feele sin as it is in your Hearts and lives*, as oft as you *read and heare of it in the Law of God*, I dare say

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sin

sin would not seeme a jesting matter, nor would those be censured as too precise, that are carefull to avoid it, any more then they that are carefull to avoid infectious diseases, or crimes against the Lawes of man, that hazzard their temporall felicity or lives.

4. Its want of *self-aquaintance* that keepes the soule from kindly *Humiliation*: That men are insensible of their Spirituall calamities, and lie under a load of unpardoned sin and Gods displeasure, and never feele it, nor loath themselves for all the abominations of their hearts and lives, nor make complaint to God or man with any seriousness and sense. How many hearts would be filled with wholesome grieve and care, that now are careless and almost past feeling? and how many eyes would stream forth teares that now are dry, if men were but truly acquainted with themselves? It is *self-knowledge* that causeth the solid peace and joy of a Believer: as conscious of that Grace that warranteth his peace and joy: But it is *self-deceit* and ignorance that quieteth the presumptuous, that walke as carelessly, and sleep as quietly, and blesse themselves from Hell as confidently, when

when it is ready to devoure them , as if the bitterness of death were past , and hypocrisy would never be discovered.

5. It is *unacquaintednes with themselves* that makes *Christ so undervalued* by the unhumbled world: that his *Name is revered* but his *office and Saving grace are disregarded*. Men could not let so light by the Phylsion , that felt their sicknes, and understood their danger. Were you sensible that you are under the wrath of God , and shall shortly and certainly be in Hell, if a Christ received by a hearty working , purifying faith, do not deliver you, I dare say , you would have more serious, savory thoughts of Christ , more yearnings after him, more fervent prayers for his healing grace , and sweet remembrance of his love and merits , example, doctrine and inestimable benefits , then lifeless hypocrites ever were acquainted with.

Imagine with what desires and expectations the diseased, blind and lame cryed after him for healing to their bodies, when he was on earth. And would you not more highly value him, more importunately sollicit him for your soules , if you knew yourselves?

6. It is *unacquaintednes with themselves* that makes men *think so unworthily of a Holy Heavenly Conversation*; and that possesseth them with foolish prejudice against the holy *Care and diligence* of believers: did men but value their immortall souls, as Reason itself requireth them to do, is it possible they should venture them so easily upon everlasting misery, and account it unnecessary strictnes in them that dare not be as desperately venturous as they, but fly from sin, and fear the threatnings of the Lord? Did men but consideratly understand the worth and concernment of their souls, is it possible they should hazard them for a thing of nought, and set them at saile for the favor of superiors, or the transitory pleasures and honours of the world? Could they thinke the greatest care and labour of so short a life to be too much for the securing of their salvation? Could they think so many studious carefull dayes, and so much toil to be but meet and necessary for their bodyes, and yet think all too much that's done, for their immortall souls? Did men but *practically know* that they are the *Subjects* of the God of Heaven, they durst not think the *diligent obeying him* to be a needless thing, when they like that

Child

Child or servant best, that is most willing and diligent in their Service. Alas were men but acquainted with their weakness, and sinfull failings when they have done their best, and how much short the hoylest Persons do come of what they are obliged to by the Lawes and mercies of the Lord, they durst not make a scorn of diligence, nor hate or blame men for endeavouring to be better, that are sure at best they shall be too bad. When the worst of men, that are themselves the greatest neglecters of God and their salvation, shall cry out against a Holy life and making so much a do for Heaven, (as if a man that lyeth in bed should cry out against working too much or going too fast) this shewes mens strangeness to themselves. Did the careless world but know themselves, and see where they stand, and whats before them, and how much lyeth on this inch of time; did they but know the nature and employment of a soul, and why their Creator did place them for a little while in flesh, and whither they must goe when time is ended, you should then see them in that serious frame themselves which formerly they dislikt in others: and they would then confess that if any thing in the

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world

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world deserved seriousness and diligence, it is the pleasing of God, and the saving of our souls.

7. It is for want of *acquaintance with themselves*, that men are so *deceived by the vanities of the world*: that they are drowned in the love of *pleasures and sensuall delights*: that they are so greedy for *Riches*, and so desirous to be *higher* then those about them, and to waste their dayes in the pursuit of that which will not help them in the houre of their extremity. Did the *voluptuous sensualist* know aright that he is a *Man*, he would not take up with the pleasures and felicity of a *bruit*; nor enslave his *Reason* to the violence of his *Appetite*. He would know that there are *higher pleasures* which beseem a *Man*: even those that consist in the *well being and integrity* of the *soule*, in peace of Conscience, in the favour of God, and Communion with him in the Spirit, and in a holy life, and in the fore-thoughts and Hopes of endless Glory.

Did the *Covetous worldling* know himself, he would know that it must be another kind of *Riches*, that must *satisfie* his *soul*, and that he hath wants of another *nature* to be supplied; and that it more
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concernneth him to *lay up a treasure in Heaven*, and think where he must dwell for ever, then to accommodate his perishing flesh, and make provision with so much a doe, for a life that passeth away while he is providing for it: he would rather *make him friends with the Mammon of unrighteousness*, and *lay up a foundation for the time to come*, and labour for the food that never perisheth, then to make such a stir for that which will serve him so little a while: that so he might hear, [*Well done thou Good and faithfull servant, &c.*] rather then [*Thou foole this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided.*]

Self-knowledge would teach *Ambitious* men, to prefer the *calmest safest* station, before the *highest*; and to seek first the *Kingdom of God and its righteousness*, and to please him most carefully that hath the *Keyes of Heaven and Hell*: and to be content with food and rayment in the way, while they are *Ambitious* of a higher *Glory*. It would tell them, that, so dark and fraile a creature should be more solicitous to *Obey* then to have *Dominion*; and that large Possessions are not the most congru-

congruous or desireable Passage, to a narrow grave; and that it is the highest dignity to be an heire of Heaven. Would men but spend some houres time, in the study of themselves and seriously consider what it is to be a *Man*, a *sinner*, a *Passenger to an endless life*, an *expectant* of so great a change, and withall to be a *profest Believer*, what a turne would it make in the cares, and the desires, and conversations of the most?

O amatores mundi (inquit August.) cuius rei gratia militatis? — Ibi quid nisi fragile plenum periculis? et per quot pericula pervenitur ad majus periculum? periant hac omnia, et dimittamus hac vana et inania, conseramus nos ad solum inquisitionem eorum qua finem non habeant.] i. e. What strive you for, O worldings? Whats here but a brittle glass full of dangers? and by how many dangers must you come to greater dangers? Away with these vanities and toyes, and let us set our selves to seek the things that have no end.]

8. It is for want of *self-acquaintance* that *any man is Proud*. Did men *considerately know what they are*, how quickly would it bring them low? Would corruptible

ruptible flesh that must shortly turne to loathsome rottenness, be stout and Lordly and look so high and set forth it self in gawdy ornaments, if men did not forget themselves? Alas, the way forgets the end: the outward bravery forgets the dirt and filth within: the stage forgetteth the undressing roome. Did Rulers behave themselves as those that are subjects to the Lord of all, and have the greatest need to feare his judgment, and prepare for their account: did Great ones live as men that know that Rich and poore are equall with the Lord, who respects not persons; and that they must Speedily be levelled with the lowest, and their dust be mixed with the Common earth; what an alteration would it make in their deportment and affaires? and what a mercy would it prove to their inferiours and themselves? If men that swell with pride of parts, and overvalue their knowledge, wit or elocution, did know how little indeed they know, and how much they are ignorant of, it would much abate their pride and confidence. The more men know indeed, the more they know to humble them. It is the Novices that being lifted up with Pride do fall into the Condemnation

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tion of the Devill. 1 Tim. 3. 6. They would loath themselves if they knew themselves.

9. It is *self-ignorance* that makes men *rust upon Temptations*, and *choose them*, when they customarily pray against them. Did you know what *tinder* or *gunpowder* lodgeth in your *natures*, you would guard your eyes and eares and appetites and be afraid of the least spark: you would not be indifferent as to your company nor chuse a life of danger to your souls, for the pleasing of your flesh; to live among the snares of honour or beauty and bravery, or sensuall delights: you would not willfully draw so *neare the brinke* of Hell, nor be *nibbling* at the *bait*, nor *looking on the forbidden fruit*, nor *dallying* with *allurements*, nor *hearkening* to the Deceiver, or to his messengers. It is ignorance of the weakness and badness of your hearts, that maketh you so confident of your selves, as to think that you can heare any thing, and see any thing, and approach the snare, and treat with the Deceiver, without any danger, self-acquaintance would cause more feare and self-suspitions.

If you should scape well a *while* in your
self-

self-chosen dangers, you may catch that at last that may prove your wo.

Nemo sese tuto periculis offerre tam crebro potest.

Quem saepe transit casus, aliquando invenit.
Seneca.

Temptation puts you on a combat with the powers of earth, and flesh and Hell! And is toyl and danger your delight? *Nunquam periculum sine periculo vincitur*] saith Seneca : Danger is never overcome without danger ; Its necessary valour to charge through all, which you are in : But its temerarious foolhardiness to seek for danger, and invite such enemies when we are so weak : Saith Augustin ; *Nemo sibi proponat & dicat, habere volo quod vincam : hoc est, dicere, vivere desidero & volo sub ruina.*] Goliath's [give me man to fight with,] is a prognostick of no good success. Rather foresee all your dangers to avoid them. Understand where each temptation lieth, that you may go another way, if possible. *Castitas periclitatur in deliciis ; humilitas in divitiis ; pietas in negotiis ; veritas in multiloquio ; charitas in hoc mundo.*] saith Bern. [Chastity is endangered in de-
lights ;

lights : humility in riches ; piety in businesses ; truth in too much talk ; and charity in this world.] Alas did we but think what temptations did with a Noah, a Lot, a David, a Solomon, a Peter; we would be afraid of the enemy & weapon that such worthies have been so wounded by, and of the quicksands where they have so dangerously fallen. When Satan durst assault the Lord himself; What hope will he have of such as we? When we consider the millions that are blinded, and hardened and damned by temptations, are we in our wits if we will cast our selves into them? [*Præceptum est, qui transire contendit, ubi conspexerit alios cecidisse : Et vehementer infræxis est, cui non incutitur timor alio perenante.* Aug.

10. Self-acquaintance would confute Temptations, and easily resolve the case when you are tempted. Did you considerately know the preciousness of your souls, and your own concernments, and where your true felicity lieth, you would abhor allurements, and encounter them with that argument of Christ, Mark. 8. 36, 37. *What shall it profit a man, if he win the world and lose his soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*] The fear of man would be conquered by a greater fear; as
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the Lord commandeth, Luke 12. 4, 5.

[And I say unto you, my friends; Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: *Having* But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell: Yea, I say unto you: Fear him.]

II. It is *unacquaintedness with themselves*, that makes men quarrell with the word of God, rejecting it when it suits not with their *deceived reason*, and to be offended with his faithfull Ministers, when they cross them in their opinions or ways, or deal with them with that serious plainness, as the weight of the Case, and their necessity doth require. Alas, Sirs, if you were acquainted with your selves, you would know that the *holy Rule* is *strait*, and the *crookedness* is in *your conceits* and *misapprehensions*; and that *your frail understandings* should rather be inspected then the word of God; and that your work is to *learn and obey the Law*, and not to *censure* it, James 4. 11. And that quarrelling with the holy word which you should obey, will not *excuse* but *aggravate* your sin; nor *save* you from the condemnation, but *fasten* it and make it

it *greater*. You would know that it is more wisdom to stoop, then to contend with God: and that it is not your *Physitions*, nor the *medicine* that you should fall out with, nor desire to be delivered from, but the *disease*.

12. *Self-acquaintance* would teach men to be *Charitable to others*, and cure the common *censoriousness*, and *envy*, and *malice* of the world. Hath thy neighbour *some mistakes* about the disputable points of doctrine, or doubtfull modes of Discipline or Worship? Is he *for the opinion*, or *form*, or *Policy*, or *Ceremony*, which thou *dislikest*? or is he *against them* when thou *approvest* them? or *afraid to use them*, when thou *thinkest them laudable*? If thou *know thy self*, thou *darest not break charity or peace for this*. Thou *darest not censure or despise him*: But wilt remember the frailty of thy *own understanding*, which is not infallible in matters of this rank; and in many things *is certainly mistaken*, and needs forbearance as well as he. Thou wouldst be afraid of inviting God or man to condemn thy self, by thy condemning others; and wouldst think with thy self,

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If every error of no more importance in persons that hold the Essentials of Religion, and conscionably practise what they know, must go for *Hereſie*, or make men *Seſtaries*, or cut them off from the *favour of God*, or the *Communion of the Church*, or the *protection of the Magiſtrate*, and ſubject them to *damnation*, to *miſery*, to *cenſures* and *reproach*: alas, what then muſt become of ſo frail a wretch as I? of ſo dark a mind, of ſo blameable a heart and life? that am like to be miſtaken in matters as great, where I leaſt ſuſpect it? It is ignorance of *themſelves*, that makes men ſo eaſily think ill of their brethren, and entertain all hard or miſ-reports of them, and look at them ſo ſtrangely, or ſpeak of them ſo contemptuouſly and bitterly, and uſe them ſo un-compassionately, becauſe they are not in all things of *their* opinion and way. They conſider not *their own* infirmities, and that they teach men how to uſe *themſelves*. The falls of brethren would not be over-aggravated, nor be the matter of *insulting* or *contempt*, but of *compassion*, if men knew *themſelves*. This is implied in the charge of the Holy Ghoſt, Gal. 6. 1, 2. [*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch a one in the ſpirit*
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of meekness, considering thy self lest thou also be tempted : Bear ye one anothers burdens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ.]

The Pharisee that seeth not the beam of mortal formality and hypocrisie in his own eye, is most censorious against the motes of tolerable particular errors in his brothers eye. None more uncharitable against the real or supposed errors or slips of serious Believers, then Hypocrites that have no saving serious faith and knowledge, but place their Religion in Opinion and outside shews, and wholly err from the path of Life.

13. It is ignorance of themselves that makes men *Divide the Church of Christ*, and pertinaciously keep open its bleeding wounds, and hinder Concord, and disturb its peace. How far would *self-acquaintance* go to the Cure of *all our discords and divisions*? Is it possible that the Pope should take upon him the *Government of the Antipodes*, even of *all the World*, (and that as to *Spiritual Government*, which requireth more personal attendance, then secular,) if he knew himself, and consequently his *natural incapacity*, and the terror of his account for such an Usurped charge? *Self-acquaintance* would depose their *Inquisitions*,
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and *quench* their flames; and make them *know what spirit they are of*, that inclineth not to *save mens lives*, but to *destroy them*, *Luke 9. 55, 56.* Did they *know themselves*, the *Papists* durst not multiply new Articles of faith, and ceremonies and depart from the ancient simplicity of the Gospel, and turn the Creed or Scripture into all the Volumes of their Councils, and say, *All these decrees or determinations of the Church are necessary to salvation*; and so make the way of life more difficult, if not impossible (had they indeed the *Keyes*) by multiplying of their supposed *Necessaries*. Did they but *know themselves aright*, it were impossible they should dare to pass the sentence of damnation on the far greatest part of the Christian world, because they are not subject to their pretended Vice-Christ. Durst one of the most *leprous corrupted sort* of Christians in the world unchurch *all the rest* that will not be as bad as they, & condemn all other Christians as Hereticks or Schismatics, either for their adhering to the truth or for errors and faults, far smaller then their own? Did they *know themselves* and their *own corruptions*, they durst not thus condemn themselves, by so presumptuous and blind a *condemnation*, of

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the *best* and *greatest* part of the Church of Christ, which is dearest to him, as *purchased by his blood*. If either the *Protestants* or the *Greeks*, or the *Armenians*, *Georgians*, *Syrians*, *Egyptians*, or *Aethiopian Churches*, be in as bad and dangerous a case as these *Usurping Censurers* tell the world they are, what then will become of the tyrannous, superstitious, polluted, blood-thirsty Church of *Rome*?

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Gal. 6, 3, 4. The *seal and witness and beginnings of Life*, must be *within you*, if you will know that you *are the Heirs of Life*.

19. *Self-ignorance* causeth men to *misinterpret and repine at the providence of God*, and to be *froward* under his most righteous *judgements*: Because men know not what they have *deserved*, or what they *are*, and what is *good for them*; therefore they know not the *reason and intent* of providence: and therefore they quarrell with their Maker, and murmur as if he did them wrong. When *self-acquaintance* would teach them to *justifie God* in all his dealings, and resolve the blame of all into *themselves*. The *Nature of man* doth teach all the world, when any hurt is done to Societies or persons, to enquire by whose *Will* as well as by whose *hands*, it was perpetrated; and to resolve all the *Crimes* that are committed in the world unto the *Will* of man, and there to leave the guilt and blame, and not to excuse the Malefactors upon any pretense of the *concourse*, or *predetermination* of the first or any superior *cause*: And to justifie the Judge and executioner that takes away mens lives, or their estates; as long as themselves are proved to *deserve* it. And
surely

surely the Knowledge of the Nature and Pravity of man, should teach us to deale as equally with God, and finally resolve all guilt and blame into the *Free and Vitiated Will* of man. Humbling self-knowledge maketh us say with *Job. ch. 40. 4.* Behold, I am vile, what Shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth :] and when God is glorifying himself on our relations or our selves by his judgments, it teacheth us with *Aræon* to hold our Peace, *Lev. 10. 3.* and to say with *Eli*, [*It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good*] *1 Sam. 3. 18.* And with *David*, *2. Sam. 15. 25.* [*If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord he will bring me againe, and show me it, and his habitation: But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good to him.*] And as the afflicted Church *Mic. 7. 9.* [*I will beare the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.*] Even a Pharaoh when affliction hath taught him a little to know himself will say [*The Lord is Righteous, and I and my people are wicked*] *Exod. 9. 27.* when *Rehoboam* and his Princes are humbled, they say [*The Lord is Righteous*] *2. Chron. 12. 6.* see *Ezr. 9. 15.*

20. Lastly, it is for want of the *Knowledge of ourselves*, that *precious Time* is *so much lost*, and *hastening Death* no more *prepared for*. Did we carry still about us the *sensible Knowledge of our Necessity*, our *Mortality* and the *unconceivable change* that's made by *Death*, we should then live as men that are continually *waiting for the coming of their Lord*; and as if we *still beheld our graves*. For wee carry about us, that *sin and frailty*, such *corruptible flesh*, as may tell us of *Death* as plainly as a *Grave or Skeleton*. So great so *unspeakably necessary* a work as the *serious diligent preparation* for our end, could not be so *sottishly neglected* by the *ungodly*, did they *thoroughly and feelingly know* what it is to be a *Mortall man*, and what to have an *immortall soule*; what it is to be a *sinner*, and what to *pass into an endless life* of *Joy or Misery*.

And thus I have shewed you some of the fruits, both of the *Knowledge and Ignorance of ourselves*: even in our *Naturall and Morall and Politicall capacities*; (though it be the second that is directly intended in the Text,) which may help you in the *Application*.

Use.

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AND now I may suppose that the best of you all, the most Honourable, the most Learned, the most Religious (of them I dare affirm it) will acknowledge, that I want not sufficient Reason to urge you, with the Question in my Text [*Know yee not your owne selves?*] Judge by the fore-mentioned effects, whether *self-acquaintance*, even in the most weighty and necessary respects, be common among professed Christians. Doth he duely know himself as he is a *man*, that *doubteth of a Deity* whose *Image* is his very essence, (though not the Morall Image that must be produced by renewing Grace)? Or he that doubteth of a *particular Providence*, of which he hath daily and hourly experience? Or he that doubteth of the *Immortality of his soul*, or of the *Life to come*, which is the *end* of his *Creation* and *endowments*, and is legibly engraven on the *Nature* and *faculties* of his *soul*? Do they *Morally* know themselves, that make a *jest* of *sin*; and make it their *delight*? that *bear* it as the *lightest burden*, and are not
so

so much *humbled* by all the *distempers* and *miseryes* of their *soules*, as they would be by a *leprosie*, an *imprisonment* or *disgrace*? that have as *cold unthankfull thoughts* of *Christ* and of his *grace* and *benefits* as a *sicke stomack* of a *feast*? That *complement* with him at the *doore*; but will not be *perswaded* to let him in; unless he will come upon *their termes*, and will dwell with their *unmortified sin*, and be a *servant* to their *flesh*, and leave them their *worldly prosperity* and *delights*, and save them for these *complements* and *leavings* of the *flesh*, when *sin* and the *world* shal cast them off?

Do those men truly know themselves, that think they *need not* the *Spirit of Christ* for *Regeneration*, *conversion* and *sanctification*, nor *need not* a *diligent Holy life*, nor to be halfe so *carefull* and *serious* for their *salvation*, as they are for a *shadow* of *happiness* in the *world*? That would without *entreaty* bestir themselves, if their houses were on *fire*, or they were *drowning* in the *water*, or were *assaulted* by a *thief* or *enemy*; and yet *think* he is *too troublesome* and *Precise* that intreateth them to bestir themselves for *Heaven*, and to quit themselves like men for their *Salvation*,
on,

on, and to *look about* them and *spare no pains*, for the escaping everlasting misery; when *this is the time, the only time*, when all this must be done, or they are utterly undone for ever.

Do they *know themselves*, and what they want, and what indeed would do them good, that itch after *sensuall beasti- all delights*, and *glut* their *flesh*, and please their *appetites* and *lusts*, and waste their time in needless Sports and long for honour and greatness in the world, and study for *preferment* more than for *Sal- vation*, and think they can never *stand too high* nor *have too much*; As if it were so desirèable to fall from the highest pinnacle, or to dye forsaken by that, for which they forsook the Lord.

Do our feathred, powdered, gawdy gallants, or our frizled, spotted, wanton dames, understand what it is that they are so proud of, or do so carefully trim up and adorn? Do they know what flesh is, as they would do, if they saw the comlyest of their companions, when hee hath layn a *month* or *twelvemonth* in the *grave*; Do they know *what sin is*, as a *sight of Hell* would make them know, or the *true Be- liefe* of such a state? If they *did*, they would

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 sons in their case have something els to
 mind and do, then toyishly to spruce up
 themselves, like handsome pictures for men
 to look upon; and something els to spend
 their hours in, then dalliance and com-
 plements and unnecessary ornaments;
 and that the amiable and honourable beau-
 ty, and comeliness, and worth consisteth
 in the Holy Image of God, the wis-
 dom and Heavenly endowments of the
 soul, and in a Heavenly, charitable, righte-
 ous conversation, and good works; and
 not in a curious dress or gawdy attire,
 which *a foole* may wear as well as a *wise*
man, and a *carkass* as well as a *living man*,
 and a *Dives* that must lie in Hell, when
 a *Lazarus* may lie in sores and
 rags.

Do they *know themselves*, that fear
no snares, but *chuse* the life of greatest
 temptations and danger to their souls;
 because it is *highest* or hath most provi-
 sion for the flesh? and that think they
 can keep in their candle in the greatest
 storms, and in any company maintaine
 their innocency? And yet cannot
 understand so much of the will of God.

nor of their own Interest and necessity and danger, as to *resist* a temptation *when it comes*, though it offer them but the most inconsiderable trifle, or the most sordid and unmanly lust.

Do they *know themselves*, that are prying into *unrevealed things*, and will be *wise*, in matters of Theology *above what is written*? that dare set their shallow brains, and dark unfurnished understandings, against the infallible word of God; and question the truth of it, because it suiteth not with their lame and carnall apprehensions; or because *they cannot reconcile* what *seemeth to them* to be *contradiction*: nor answer the objection of every bold and ignorant infidell: In a word, when *God* must not be *God* unless he please them, nor his *word* be *true* unless it be all *within the reach* of them, that never imployed the time and study to understand it, as they do to understand the Books that teach them Languages, Arts, and Sciences, and treat of lower things: And when Scripture truth must be called in question, as oft as an ignorant eye shall read it, or an unlearned graceless person misunderstand it: when *Offenders* that should bewail and reform their *own transgressions*

The Mischief of Self-ignorance,

of the Law shall turn their accusations against the Law and call it too precise or strict, and believe and practise, no more then stands with their obedience to the Law of sin, and will quarrell with God, when they should humbly learn, and carefully obey him: and *despise* a life of *holy obedience* in stead of *practising* it; and in effect behave themselves as if *they* were fitter to *Rule themselves* and the world, then *God is*; and as if it were not *God* but *they*, that should *give the Law* and be the *Judge*; and *God* were the *Subject*, and *man* were *God*. Do you think that sinfull creeping worms, that stand so near the Grave and Hell do *know themselves*, when they *think* or *speak* or *live* at such rates, and according to such unreasonable arrogancie? Do they *know themselves*, that *reproach their brethren* for humane frailties, and difference of opinion in modes and circumstances, and errors smaller then *their own*? And that by calling all men Hereticks, Sectaries, or Shismaticks that differ from them, do tempt men to turn Infidells or Papists, and to *take us all* for such as we account each other? And that instead of *Receiving the weak in faith* whom God *receiveth*, will rather *cast out the faithfullst Laborers*, and *cut off Christs living members*

members from his Church, then forbear the imposing of unnecessary things? I dare say, were it not for *unacquaintedness with our brethren and our selves*, we should put those in our bosoms as the beloved of the Lord, that now we load with censures and titles of reproach: and the restoring of our charity would be the restoring of our Unity. If blind men would make Lawes for the banishment of all that cannot read the smallest characters, you would say, they had forgot themselves. Nay when men turne *Papists* or *Separatists* and fly from our Churches, to shun those that perhaps are better then themselves, and to get far enough from the smaller faults of others, while they carry with them far greater of their own: when people are apter to accuse the Church then themselves, and say the Church is unworthy of their Communion rather then that they are unworthy the communion of the the Church, and think no room in the house of God is clean and good enough for them, while they overlook their owne uncleanness; when men endure an hundred *Calumnies* to be spoken of their brethren, better then a plain reprehension to themselves; as if their

persons only would render their actions justifiable, and the reprover culpable; Judge whether these men are well acquainted with themselves.

What should we go further in the search; when in all ages and countries of the world the Unmercifullness of the Rich, the Murmuring of the poor, the hard usage by Superiors, the disobedience of inferiors, the commotions of the state, the wars and rebellions that disquiet the world, the cruelty covered with pretences of Religion, the unthankfullness for Mercyes, the murmuring under afflictions, too openly declare that most men have *little knowledge of themselves*; To conclude, when we see that none are more self-accusing and complaining then the *most sincere*, and none more self-justifying and confident then the *ungodly* careless souls, that none walk more *heavily* then many of the heirs of life, and none are *merrier* then many that must lie in Hell for ever: that all that a Minister can say, will not convince *many upright* ones of their *integrity*, nor any skill or industry or interest suffice to convince *most wicked men* that they are *wicked*; nor if our lives lay on it, we cannot make them see the
necessity

necessity of *Conversion*, nor know their misery till feeling tell them it is now too late: when so many walke *sadly* and *lamentingly* to *Heaven*; and so many goe *fearlessly* and *Presumptuously* to *Hell*, and will not believe it till they are there; by all this judge, what work self-ignorance maketh in the world.

Ἰνῶτι σεαυτὸν is many a mans *Motto*, that is a stranger to himself. As the house may be dark within that hath the sign of the sun hanging at the door. *Multi humilitatis umbram, pauci veritatem sectantur*, saith Hieron. A blind man may commend the sun, and dispute of Light. A man may discourse of a country that he knoweth not. Its easy to say, *Men should know themselves* and out of the Book or brain to speak of the matters of the Heart: But indeed to know ourselves as men, as sinners, as Christians, is a Work of greater difficulty, and such as few are well acquainted with: Shall I go a little further in the discovery of it?

I. Whence is it that most are so *unhumbled*; so great and good in their own esteem; so strange to true contrition and self-*abhorrence*; but that they are voluntary strangers to themselves? To loath themselves for

sin, to be little in their own eyes, to come to Christ as little children, is the case of all that know themselves aright, Ezek. 20. 43. & 6. 9. Math. 18. 3, 4. 1. Sam. 15. 17. And Christ made himself of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a servant, and set us pattern of the most wonderfull humiliation that ever was performed, to convince us of the necessity of it, that have *sin* to humble us, when he had none. Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9. Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly, Matthew 11. 28. And one would think, it were a lesson easily learnt by such as we that carry about us within and without, so much sensible matter of humiliation. Saith *Augustin de Verb. Dei*. [*Discite à me, non mandum fabricare, non cuncta visibilia & invisibilia creare, non miracula facere, et mortuos suscitare, sed quoniam mitis sum, & humilis corde*] Had Christ bid us learn of him to make a world, to raise the dead, and work miracles, the lesson had been strange: but to be Meek and lowly is so suitable to our low condition, that if we knew ourselves we could not be otherwise.

To be holy without Humility, is to be a man without the essentialls of Nature, or

to build without a Foundation [*Quisne humilitate Virtutes congregat, quasi in ventum pulverem portat*] saith Greg. in Psal. 3. *Pœnit*: It is but carrying dust into the wind, to think to gather commendable qualities without humility. It is the contrite heart that is the habitation and delight of God on earth; the acceptable sacrifice; Isa. 57. 15. & 66. 2. Psal. 51. 17. *Tanto quis vilior Deo, quanto preciosior sibi: Tanto preciosior Deo, quanto propter eum vilior est sibi*] saith Greg. Mor. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be brought low. We must not overvalue our selves, if we would have God esteem us, we must be vile and loathed either in his eyes or our own. [*Solet esse specificum electorum*, saith Greg. Mor. *quod de se semper sentiunt infra quam sunt*, It is specificall to the Elect to think meanly of themselves then they are. *Recta facere, & inutiles se reputare*, as Bernard speaks. But I urge you not to err in your humility, nor *humilitatis causâ mentiri*, as August. It were low enough, if we were as low, in our own esteem, as we are indeed: which self-acquaintance must procure. *Quanto quis minus se videt, tanto minus sibi displicet*; saith Greg. *Et quanto majoris gratie lumen percipit, tanto magis reprehensi-*

reprehensibilem se esse cognoscit] He is least displeased with himself, that least knoweth himself: and he that hath the greatest light of grace, perceiveth most in himself to be reprehended. Illumination is the first part of Conversion, and of the new creature: And self-discovery is not the least part of Illumination. There can be no Salvation without it, because no humiliation. saith Bernard in Cantic. [*scio neminem absque sui cognitione salvari, de qua nimirum mater salutis humilitas oritur, & timor Domini.*]

But how rare this is, let experience determine: To have a poor habitation, a poore attire, and perhaps of choice (though that's not usuall) is much more common then a humble soul, [*sed tumet animus, sub squallore habitus, ut Hier.*] & multo illa deformior est superbia, qua latet sub quibusdam signis humilitatis, inquit Idem, It is the most ill favoured Pride, that stealeth some rags of humility to hide its shame. And saith Hierom truly [*Plus est animum de posse quam cultum: difficilins arrogancia quam auro caremus, aut gemmis*], Its easier to change our clothing then our mind, and to put off a gawdy habit then our self flattering tumified hearts. Many a one can live quietly without gold rings and jewells
or

or sumptuous houses and attendance, that cannot live quietly without the esteem and applause of men, nor endure to be accounted as indeed he is. Saith Ambrose, *Qui pauperate contentus est, non est contentus injuria.* — *Et qui potest administrationes contem- nere, dolet sibi aliquem honorificentia esse praetium.*]

O therefore as you would escape Divine contempt and the most desperate precipitation, know your selves. For that which cast Angells out of Heaven, will keep you out, if it prevail. As Hugo acutely saith, *Superbia in caelo nata est, sed immemor qua via inde cecidit, illuc postea redire non potuit*] Pride was bred in Heaven (no otherwise then as Death, in Life) but can never hit the way hither again, from whence it fell. Open the windows of our breast to the Gospell-light, to the Laws conviction, to the light of reason, and then be unhumbled if you can. [*Quare enim superbit cinis & terra?* saith Origen: *oblitus quid erit, & quam fragili vasculo contineatur, & quibus stercoreibus immersus sit, & qualia semper purgamenta de sua carne projiciat*] Nature is low, but sin and wrath are the matter of our great humiliation, that have made us miserably lower.

2. The abounding of *Hypocrisie* sheweth how little men are acquainted with themselves. I speak not here of that *gross* Hypocrisie which is allwayes known to him that hath it, but of that *close* Hypocrisie, which is *A professing to be what we are not*, or to *believe what we believe not*, or to *have what we have not*, or to *do what we do not*. What *Article of the faith* do not most among us confidently *profess*? What *Petition of the Lords prayer* will they not put up? Which of the *Commandements* will they *not profess* their obedience to? While the stream of their conversation testifieth, that in their *hearts* there is none of the *Belief*, the *Desire*, or the *Obedience* in *sincerity* which they profess. Did they *know themselves*, they would be ashamed of the vanity of their profession, and of the miserable want of the things professed; and that God who is so nigh their mouths is so far from their hearts. If you heard an illiterate man profess, that he understandeth all the Languages and Sciences, or a beggar boasting of his wealth, or a parrot taught to say that he is a Man; would you take any of these to be the words of one that *knows himself*?

Quid est vita Hypocrita (inquit Gregor.)
nisi

nisi quadam visio phantasmatis, qua hic ostendis in imagine, quod non habet in veritate? Sure they are in the dark that spend their days in dreaming visions: But they have their eyes so much on the beholders, that they have no leisure to peruse themselves: They are so carefull to be esteemed good, that they are careless of being what they seem. Quo magis exterius hominibus placeant, eo se interius aspicere negligunt, totosque se in verbis proximorum fundunt, & sanctos se esse aestimant, quia sic se haberi ab hominibus pensant, ut Gregor. Mor.

Especially if they practise not the vicious inclinations of their hearts, they think they have not the vice they practise not, and that the Root is dead because it's winter: when it is the absence of temptations and occasions, and not of vicious habits, or inclinations, that smooths their lives with seeming innocencie, and keeps their sins from breaking forth to their own or others observation. Multorum, quae inbecillia sunt, latent vitia, saith Seneca; instrumenta illis explicanda nequitia desunt. Sic tuto serpens pestifer tractatur, dum rigit frigore; non desunt tamen illi venena, sed torpent: ita multorum crudelitas, luxuria &

& ambitio] The feeble vices of many lie hid: there are wanting instruments of drawing forth their wickedness. So a poysonous serpent may be safely handled, while he is stiff with cold, and yet it is not because he hath no venome, but because its stupified: so is it with the cruelty, luxurie and ambition of many.] The knowledge of your selves is the bringing in of light into your souls, which will awaken you from the hypocrites dream, and make such apparitions vanish. Come near this fire, and the paint of hypocrisie will melt away.

3. The common impatience of plain reproof, and the love of flattery, shews us how much self-ignorance doth abound. Most men love those that have the highest estimation of them, be it true or false. They are seldom offended with any for overvaluing them. They desire not much to be accounted Well when they are Sick, nor Rich when they are Poor; but to be accounted wise though they are foolish, and godly when they are ungodly, and honest & faithfull when they are deceitfull and corrupt, this is a courtesie that you must not deny them: they take it for their due: They'l never call you Hereticks for such Errors as these: And why is it, but because they err themselves

selves, about themselves, and therefore would have others do so too.

Nimis perverse seipsum amat, qui & alios vult errare, ut error suus lateat: saith August. He too perversely loveth himself, that would have others err to hide his error. A wise man loveth himself so well, that he would not be flattered into Hell, nor die as Sisera or Sampson, by good words, as the harbingers of his wo. He loveth his Health so well, that he thinks not the sweetness or colour of the fruit, a motive sufficient to encourage him to a surfeit. He loveth ingenuous Penitence so well, that he cannot love the flatterers voice, that contradicteth it. Faithfull reprovers are the messengers of Christ, that call us to Repentance, that is, to Life: Unfaithfull flatterers are the messengers of the Devil, to keep us from Repentance, and harden us in impenitency, unto Death: If we know our selves, we shall know that when we are over-loved and over-praised as being more learned, wise, or holy then we are, it is not we that are loved and praised; for we are not such as that Love or praise supposeth us to be. Saith August. [Vos qui me multum diligitis, si talem me asseritis, ut nunquam me in scriptis meis errasse dicatis,

dicatis, frustra laboratis; non bonam causam suscepistis: facile in eo, me ipso iudice, superamini. Quoniam non mihi placet, cum à charissimis talis esse existimor, qualis non sum. Profectò non me, sed pro me alium sub meo nomine diligunt; si non quod sum, sed quod non sum diligunt.] It pleased him not to be accounted *unerring* in his writings, and to be taken by his friends to be what he *was* not; which is not to love him, but another under his name. He that knoweth himself, perceiveth how much of the Commendation is his *due*, and how much he can lay just claim to: and knoweth it is a *dishonour* to own the honour that is not his own. He loves not to be *belyed* by a praiser, any more then by a *dispraiser*; lest Truth and He be both abused. Vices, like Worms, are bred and crawl in the inward parts, unseen, unfelt of him, that carrieth them about him: And therefore by the sweet meats of flattery and sensuality they are ignorantly fed: But its bitter medicines that must kill them: which those only will endure, that know they have them, and what they are. [Lenocinantur dulcia delictis: austera vero & fortia virtutibus sunt amica.] You speak bitterly, saith the impatient sinner to the plain reprover, but such are *sweet and excellent*

excellent men that medle not with the sore. But its bitter things that are wholsom to your souls; that befriend your vertues; and kill the worms of your corruption, which sweet things cherish, saith Hierom in Eccles. [*Si cuius sermo non pungit, sed oblectationem facit audientibus, ille sermo non est sapiens, Sermons not piercing, but pleasing, are not wise.* But, alas, men follow the Appetite of their vices, not only in chusing their meat, and drink and company and recreations, but also in the choice of the Church that they will hold communion with, and the Preachers, that they will hear: and they will have the sweet, and that which their corruption loveth, come on't what will. [*Libenter enim quod delectat, audimus, & offendit omne, quod nolumus,*] saith Hierom: Nay, Pride hath got so great dominion that flattery goeth for due civility; and he is accounted Cynical or morose that useth it not. To call men as they are (even when we have a call to do it) or to tell them of their faults with necessary freedom, though with the greatest love and caution and deprecation of offence, is a thing that most, especially great ones, cannot digest: A man is supposed to rail, that speaketh without flatter-

ry; and to reproach them that would save them from their sins. Saith Hierom [*Adeo regnat vitium adulationis, quodque est gravissimum, quia humilitatis ac benevolentia loco ducitur, ita fit ut qui adulari nescit, aut invidus, aut superbus reputetur*] that is, [*the vice of flattery now so reigneth, and which is worst, goeth under the name of humility and good will, that he that knoweth not how to flatter, is reputed envious or proud.*] Indeed some men have the wit to hate a feigned Hypocritical flatterer, and also modestly to take on them to disown the excessive commendations of a friend: But these mistaken friendly flatterers do seldom displease men at the heart. [*Quaquam respondeamus nos indignos, & calidus rubor ora perfundat, tamen ad laudem suam anima intrinsecus letatur, Hieron.*] We can say we are unworthy, and modestly blush; but within, the heart is glad at its own commendation.] Saith Seneca [*Cito nobis placemus, si invenimus, qui nos bonos viros dicant, qui prudentes, qui sanctos: Non sumus modica laudatione contenti; quicquid in nos adulatio sine pudore congestit, tanquam debitum prendimus: optimos nos esse & sanctissimos affirmantibus assentimur, cum sciamus saepe illos mentiri:*] that is, [*We soon please*

our

our selves to meet with those that call us good men, wise and holy : And we are not content with a little praise : Whatever flattery heapeth on us without shame, we lay hold on it as due ; we assent to them that say we are the best and most holy, when we oft times know our selves that they lie.] All this is for want of the true knowledge of themselves. When God hath acquainted a sinner effectually with himself, he quickly calleth himself by other names, then flatterers do : With Paul he saith, [*We our selves were sometime foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures, Tit. 3. 3.*] And *Act. 26. 11.* that he was mad against the Saints in persecuting them. He then speaks so much against himself, that if tender Ministers and experienced friends, did not think better of him then he of himself, and perswade him to more comfortable thoughts, he would be ready to despair, and think himself unworthy to live upon the earth.

4. Judge also how well men know themselves, when you have observed, what different apprehensions they have, of their own faults and of other mens : and of those that are suitable to their dispositions, interests or examples, and those that are against them. They seem to judge of the actions by the

persons, and not of the *persons* by the *actions*. Though he be himself a sensualist, a worldling, drowned in Ambition and Pride, whose heart is turned away from God, and utterly strange to the mysterie of Regeneration and a heavenly life, yet all this is scarce discerned by him, and is little troublesome, and less odious then the *failings* of another, whose heart and life is devoted unto God. The *different opinions*, or *modes* and *circumstances* of worship, in another that truly feareth God, is matter of their severer censures and reproach, then their own *omissions*, and *aversness* and *enmity* to holiness, and the dominion of their deadly sins. It seems to them more intolerable for another to pray without a Book, then for themselves to pray without any serious belief, or love, or holy desire, without any feeling of their sins, or misery or wants; that is, to pray with the lips without a heart; to pray to God without God, even without the knowledge or love of God, and to pray without prayers. It seemed to the Hypocritical Pharisees, a greater crime in Christ and his Disciples, to violate their *Traditions*, in not washing before they eat, to break the Ceremonious rest of their Sabbath by healing the diseased,

ceased, or plucking ears of corn, then in themselves to hate and persecute the true believers and worshippers of God, and to kill the Lord of life himself. They censured the Samaritans for not worshipping at *Jerusalem*: but censured not themselves for not worshipping *God, that is a Spirit, in Spirit and in Truth*. Which makes me remember the course of their successors, the Ceremonious Papists; that condemn others for Hereticks, and fry them in the flames, for not believing that *Bread is no Bread*, and *Wine is no Wine*, and that *Bread* is to be *adored as God*; and that the souls of dead men know the hearts of all that pray to them in the world at once; and that the Pope is the Vice-Christ, and Sovereign of all the Christians in the world; and for reading the Scriptures and praying in a known tongue, when they forbid it; and for not observing a world of Ceremonies; when all this enmity to Reason, Piety, Charity, Humanity, all their Religious Tyranny, Hypocrisie, and Cruelty, do seem but holy zeal and laudable in themselves. To lie, dissemble, forswear, depose and murder Princes, is a smaller matter to them when the Pope dispenseth with it, and when it

tends to the advantage of their faction, which they call *the Church*, then to eat flesh on *Friday* or in *Lent*, to neglect the Mass, or Images, or Crossing, &c.

And it makes me remember Bishop *Halls* Description of *An Hypocrite* [*He turneth all gnats into Camells, and cares not to undo the world for a circumstance. Flesh on Friday is more abominable to him, then his neighbours bed: He abhors more not to uncover at the name of Jesus, then to swear by name of God, &c.*] It seems, that Prelats were guilty of this in *Bernards* dayes, who saith, [*Prelati nostri calicem linqunt, & Camelum deglutiunt: dum majora permittent, minora discutiunt. Optimi rerum aestimatores, qui magnam in minimis, & parvam aut nullam in maximis adhibent diligentiam.*] i. e. [*Our Prelats strain at a gnat, and swallow a Camel; while permitting greater matters, they discuss (or sift) the less: Excellent estimators of things indeed, that in the smallest matters imploy great diligence; but in the greatest, little or none at all.*] And the cause of all this partiality is, that *Men* are *unacquainted with themselves*. They love and cherish the same corruptions in themselves, which they should hate and reprehend in others. And
saith

saith Hierom [*Quomodo potest præsēs Ecclesie auferre malum de medio ejus, qui in delictum simile corruerit? aut qua libertate corripere peccantem potest, cum tacitus ipse sibi respondeat, eadem se admisisse quæ corripit:*] i. e. [*How can a Prelat of the Church, reform the evil that is in it, that rusheth into the like offence? Or with what freedom, can he rebuke a sinner, when his conscience secretly tells him, that he hath himself committed the same faults which he reproveth?*]

Would men but first be acquainted with themselves, and pass an impartial judgement on the affections and actions that are nearest them, and that most concern them, they would be more competent, and more compassionate Judges of their brethren, that are now so hardly used by them. Its excellent advice that *Austin* gives us, *Quum aliquem reprehendere nos necessitas coegerit, cogitemus, utrum tale sit vitium, quod nunquam habuimus; & tunc cogitemus nos homines esse, & habere potuisse, vel quod tale habuimus & jam non habemus; & tunc memoria tangat communis fragilitatis, ut illam correctionem non odium sed misericordia pracedat: Sin autem inuenerimus nos in eodem vitio esse, non objurgemus, sed ingemiscamus*

miscamus, & ad equaliter deponendum invitamus.] i. e. [*When necessity constraineth us to reprove any one, let us think whether it be such a vice as we never had our selves: and then let us think that we are men, and might have had it: Or if we once had such but have not now, then let the remembrance of common frailty touch us, that compassion and not hatred may lead the way to our reproof: But if we find that we have the same vice our selves, let us not chide, but groan, and move (or desire) that we may both equally lay it by.*]

5. It shews how little men know themselves, when they must needs be the Rule to all other men, as far as they are able to command it; and that in the matters that mens salvation dependeth on, and in the smallest, tender, disputable points; and even in those things where themselves are most unfit to judge. In every controverted point of doctrine, (though such as others have much better studied then themselves) he that hath strength to suppress all those that differ from him, must ordinarily be the umpire; so is it even in the modes and circumstances of Worship. Perhaps Christ may have the honour to be called the *King of the Church*, and the *Scripture* have the honour

to be called his *Laws*: but indeed it is *they* that would be the *Lords* themselves; and it is their *Wills* and *Words* that must be the *Laws*; and this under pretence of subserving Christ, and interpreting his *Laws*; when they have talkt the utmost for Councils, Fathers, Church, Tradition, it is *themselves* that indeed must be all these; for nothing but their own conceits and *Wills* must go for the *sense* of Decrees, or Canons, Fathers or Tradition. Even they that hate the power and serious practice of Religion, would fain be the Rule of Religion to all others: And they that never knew what it was to worship God *in Spirit and truth*, with delight and love and suitableness of soul, would needs be the Rule of Worship to all others, even in the smallest Circumstances and Ceremonies. And they would be the Governors of the Church, or the Determiners of its mode of Government, that never would be brought under the Government of Christ themselves. If it *please them* better to spend the Lords day in Plays or Sports, or complement or idleness, then in learning the will of God in his word, or worshipping him, and begging his mercy and salvation, and seriously preparing for an endless life,

life, they would have *all others* do the like. If *their full souls loathe the honey comb*, and they are *awearry* of being instructed above an hour, or twice a day; they would have all others *forced to their measure*, that *they* may *seem* as diligent as others, when others are *compelled* to be as negligent as they. Like a queasie-stomackt Lady, that can eat but one slender meal a day, and therefore would have all her servants and tenants eat no more, or if they do, accuseth them of excess. If the Emperor of *Constantinople* make a Law, that no subject shall be suffered in his dominions, that will not be conformable to him in time, and quality and measure, for meats and drink, and sleep, and speech, and exercise; it would be an honourable misery, and uniform calamity and ruine to his subjects. Alas, did men but *know themselves*, the *weakness* of their *understandings*, the *sinful byas* that personal interest and carnal inclinations have set upon their *wills*, they would be less arrogant and more compassionate, and not think by making themselves as Gods, to reduce the unavoidable diversities that will be found among mankind, to a Unity in Conformity to *their minds* and *wills*, and that in the matters of *God* and of *Salvation*;

Salvation ; where every mans conscience that is wise and faithful, will be tenacious of *double interest* (of God and of his *Soul*) which he cannot sacrifice to the will of any. But be so just as not to mistake and misreport me in all this ; as if I pleaded for libertinism or disorder , or spoke against Government Civil or Ecclesiastical ; when it is only private Ambition, uncharitableness, and cruelty ; and Papall usurpations over the Church and consciences of men, that I am speaking of ; which men, I am sure , will have other thoughts of, when God hath made them *know themselves*, then they have while passion hindreth them from knowing what spirit they are of: They will then see, that the weak in faith should have been received ; and that Catholick Unity is only to be founded in the Universal Head, and End, and Rule.

6. The dreadfull change *thats made upon mens minds, when misery or approaching death awakes them* , doth shew how little they *knew themselves before*. If they have taken the true estimate of *themselves* in their *prosperity*, how come they to be so much *changed in adversity* ? Why do they begin then to cry out of their sins, and of the folly of their worldliness and sensuality;

lity ; and of the vanity of the honours and pleasures of this life ? Why do they then begin to wish, with gripes of conscience, that they had better spent their precious time, and minded more the matters of eternity, and taken the course as those did whom they once derided , as making more ado then needs ? Why do they then tremble under the apprehensions of their unreadiness to die, and to appear before the dreadful God, when *formerly* such thoughts did little trouble them ? *Now* there is no such sense of their sin or danger upon their hearts. Who is it *now* that ever hears such lamentations and self-accusations from them, as *then* its likely will be heard ? The same man that then will wish with *Balaam*, that he might *die the death of the righteous, and that his latter end might be as his*, will *now* despise and grieve the righteous. The same man that then will passionately wish that he had spent his days in holy preparations for his change , and lived as strictly as the best about him, is now so much of another mind, that he perceives no need of all this diligence ; but thinks it is humorous or timorous superstition, or at least that he may do well enough without it. The same man that will then cry

cry [*Mercy, Mercy, O Mercy Lord, to a departing soul, thats loaden with sin, and trembleth under the fear of thy judgement,*] is now perhaps an enemy to serious earnest prayer, and hates the families and persons that most use it; or at least is prayerless, or cold and dull himself in his desires, and can shut up all with a few careless customary words, and feel no pinching necessity to awaken him, importunately to cry and strive with God. Doth not all this shew that men are befooled by prosperity, and unacquainted with themselves, till danger or calamity call them to the bar, and force them better to know themselves?

Your mutability proveth your ignorance and mistakes. If indeed your case be now as good as your present confidence or security do import, lament it not in your adversity: fear it not when Death is calling you to the bar of the impartial Judge! Cry not out then of your ungodliness and sensuality: of your trifling hypocrisie, your sleight contemptuous thoughts of God, and of your casting away your Hopes of Heaven, by wilfull negligence and delays! If you are sure that you are now in the right, and diligent serious believers in the wrong, then stand to it before the Lord: set

set a good face on your cause if it be good ;
 Be not down in the mouth when it is tried :
 God will do you no wrong : If your cause
 be good, he will surely justifie you , and
 will not mar it : Wish not to dye the death
 of the Righteous : say not to them, *Give
 us of your oyl, for our lamps are gone out :*
Mat. 25. 8. If all their Care, and Love and
 Labour, in seeking first the Kingdom of God
 and its Righteousness, be a needles thing,
 wish not for it in your extremity, but call
 it *needles* then. If fervent prayer may be
 spared now, while prayer may be heard, and
 a few lifeless words that you have learnt
 by rote may serve the turn , then call not
 on God when answering is past, seek him
 not when he will not be found, *Prov. 1.*
27, 28. *When your fear cometh as desolati-*
on , and your destruction as a whirlwind ;
when distress and anguish come upon you.]
 Cry not. [*Lord, Lord open unto us*] when
 the door is shut. *Matth. 25. 10, 11.* Call
 them not [*foolish*] then that slept , but
 them that watcht , if Christ was mistaken,
 and you are in the right, *Matth 25. 2, 8.*
Prov. 1. 22.

O Sirs, stand but at the bed-side of one
 of these ungodly careless men , and hear
 what he saith of his former life, of his ap-
 proaching

roaching change, of a Holy or a carnal course, whether a Heavenly or Worldly life is better, (unless God have left him to that explorate stupidity, which an hours time will put an end to) Hearken then whether we think that God or the world, Heaven or earth, Soul or body be more worthy of mans chiefeft care and diligence; and then judge whether such men did *know themselves* in their *health* and *pride*, when all this talk would have been *derided* by them as *too precise*, and such a life accounted *over-strict* and *needless*, as *then* they are *approving* and *wishing* they had lived: When that Minister or friend should have once been taken for censorious, abusive, self-conceited and un-sufferable, that would have talked of them in that language as when Death approacheth, they talk of *themselves*; or would have spoke as plainly, and hardly of them, as they will then do of *themselves*. Doth not this *mutability* shew how few men now have a true *knowledge of themselves*?

What is the *Repentance* of the living, and the *Desperation* of the damned, but a declaration that the persons *Repenting* and *Despairing*, were unacquainted with themselves before? Indeed the *erroneous Despair* of men while Grace is offered them, comes from

from Ignorance of the Mercy of God, and willingness of Christ to receive all that are willing to return : But yet the sense of sin and misery, that occasioneth this erroneous Despair, doth shew that men were before erroneous in their presumption and self-esteem. Saith Bernard in Cant. [*Utraque Cognitio, Dei scilicet & tui, tibi necessaria est ad salutem, quia sicut ex notitia tui venit in te timor Dei, atque ex Dei notitia itidem amor ; sic è contra, de ignorantia tui superbia, ac de Dei ignorantia venit desperatio*] that is, [Both the knowledge of God and of thy self is necessary to salvation ; because as from the Knowledge of thy self, the Fear of God cometh into thee, and Love from the knowledge of God : so on the contrary, from the Ignorance of thy self cometh pride, and from the Ignorance of God comes Desperation.] *Quid est sapientia (inquit Seneca ?) Semper idem Velle, & idem Nolle : At non potest idem semper placere nisi rectum*] Wisdom appeareth in alwayes Willing, and alwayes Nilling the same thing : but its only Right and Good that can alwayes please.

Poor men that must confess their sin and misery at last, would shew a more seasonable acquaintance with themselves, if they would do it now, and say with the Prodigal, [I will

Will go to my Father and say to him, Father I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.] In time this Knowledge, & confession may be saving. Even a Seneca could say, without the Scripture [*Initium est salutis, notitia peccati; Nam qui peccare se nescit, corrigi non vult. Ideo quantum potes, teipsum argue. Inquire in te: accusatoris primū partibus fungere; deinde iudicis; novissime deprecatoris.*] i.e. [The knowledge of sin, is the beginning of recovery (or health:) For he that knows not that he sinneth, will not be corrected. Reprehend thy self therefore as much as thou canst. Inquire into thy self: First play the part of an Accuser, then of a Judge: and lastly of one that asketh pardon.]

It is not because men are Innocent or Safe, that we now hear so little confession or complaint: but because they are sinfull and miserable in so great a measure, as not to Know or Feel it: [*Quare vitia sua nemo confitetur (inquit Seneca?) Quia etiam nunc in illis est. Somnium narrare, vigilantis est; & vitia sua confiteri, sanitatis iudicium est.*] i.e. [Why doth no man confess his vices? Because he is yet in them. To tell his dreams is the part of a man that is awake: and to confess his faults,

is a sign of health.] If you call a *Poor* man *Rich*, or a *deformed* person *beautifull*, or a *vile ungodly* person *vertuous*, or an *ignorant* *Barbarian* *learned*, will not the hearers think, you do not *know them*? And how should they think better of your *knowledge* of *your selves*, if any of you that are yet in the *flesh*, will say you are *spiritual*? and those that hate the *Holiness*, and *Justice*, and *Government* of God, will say they *love him*? or those that are in a state of *Enmity* to God, and are as near to *Hell*, as the *Execution* is to the *Sentence* of the *Law*, will perswade themselves and others, that they are the *Members* of *Christ*, the *children* of *God*, and the *heirs* of *Heaven*? and take it ill of any that would question it, though only to perswade them to make it *sure*, and to take heed what they trust to, when endless *Joy* or *Misery* must be the issue?

7. Doth it not manifest how little men *know themselves*, when in every *suffering* that *befals them*, they *overlook the Cause* of all *within them*, and *fall upon others*, or *quarrel with every thing* that *standeth in their way*. Their contempt of *God* doth cast them into some *affliction*, and they *quarrel with the Instruments*, and meddle not with the *mortall cause* at home. Their

sin finds them out, and testifieth against them; and they are angry with the rod, and repine at Providence, as if God himself were more to be suspected of the Cause than they. Yea, it is become with many a serious doubt, Whether God doth not Necessitate them to sin; and, Whether they omit not duty meerly because he will not give them power to perform it; and, Whether their sin be any other then a Relation unavoidably resulting from a Foundation laid by the hand of God himself. Do men know themselves, that will sooner suspect and blame the most Righteous, Holy God, then their own unrighteous carnal hearts? Man drinketh up iniquity like water; but there is no unrighteousnes with God. Saith Innocent, [*Conceptus est homo in fœtore luxurie, quôdque; deterius est, in labe peccati; natus ad laborem, timorem, dolorem, &c. Agit prava, quibus offendit Deum; offendit proximum; offendit seipsum; agit turpia, quibus polluit famam, polluit personam, polluit conscientiam: Agit vana, quibus negligit sana; negligit utilia; negligit necessaria.*] Man is conceived in the filth or stink of luxury (or lust,) and which is worse, in the stain of sin: born to labour, fear, and pain, &c. He doth that which is evil, to the offence of God; his neigh-

bour and himself : He doth that which is filthy, to the polluting of his fame, his person and his Conscience : He doth that which is vain, neglecting what is sound and profitable, and necessary.] And is not such a frail and sinfull wight, more likely to be the cause of sin then God? and to be culpable in all the ill that doth befall us?

And it shews that men little know themselves, when all their complaints are poured out more fluently on others then themselves. Like sick stomachs that find fault with every dish, when the fault is within them : Or like pained, weak, or froward children ; that quarrel with every thing that toucheth them, when the cause is in themselves. If they want *Peace, Content* or *Rest*, they lay the blame on this place or that ; this or that person, or estate : They think if they had their mind in this or that, they should be well : And therefore they are still contriving for somewhat, which they want ; and studying changes or longing after this or that ; which they imagine would work the Cure : When, alas poor souls, the *sin*, the *sickness*, the *want* is in themselves. It is a wiser mind, a better, more holy, heavenly will, thats wanting to them ; without which nothing in the world will solidly con-

content and comfort them. Seneca can teach them this much by the light of Nature [*Non longa peregrinatione, nec locorum varietatibus, tristitiam mentis gravitatemque discuties: animum debes mutare, non cælum: licet vastum trajeceris mare, sequantur te, quocunque perveneris, vitia. Quid miraris tibi peregrinationes non prodesse, cum te circumferas? Premitte eadem causa quæ expulit. Quid terrarum juvare novitas potest? Quid cognitio urbium aut locorum? In irritum cedit ista jactantia. Onus animi deponendum est, non ante tibi ullus placebit locus. Vadis huc & illuc, ut excutias incidens pondus, quod ipsa jactatione incommodius fit: sicut in navi onera immota minus urgent, inæqualiter convoluta citius eam partem, in quam incumbunt, demergunt. Quicquid facis, contra te facis: & motu ipso nocet tibi: egrum enim concutis. At cum istud exemeris malum, omnis mutatio loci jucundus fiet. In ultimas expellaris terras licet, in quolibet Barbaria angulo colloceris, hospitalis tibi illa qualiscunque sedes erit. Magis Quis veneris, quam Quò, interest.] that is, [It is not by long travels, or by change of places, that you can discuss the sadness and heaviness of the mind. Its the Mind, and not the Climate that you should*

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change;

change: though you pass the vastest sea, your vices will follow you whithersoever you go. Why marvellest thou that travels avail thee not, when thou carriest about thy self? The same cause that drove thee away, doth follow thee. What can the novelty of countreys avail? Or the knowledge of Cities and places? This tossing up and down is vain; Its the load of thy mind, that must be laid down: Till that be done, no place will please thee: Thou goest up and down to shake off a burden thats fastened on thee; which even by thy motion doth become more troublesome. As in a ship the settled weight is least troublesome, when things unequally thrown together, do sink the part in which they lye. What thou dost, thou dost it against thy self; and hurtest thy self by the very motion; For thou shakest a sick person: But when once thou hast taken out of thy self the evil, every change of place will be pleasant. Though thou be expelled into the remotest lands; or placed in any corner of Barbary, it will be however to thee a seat of hospitality; It more concerneth thee to know Who (or What) thou art thy self that comest thither, then Whither it is that thou comest.]

Did you know your selves in all your griefs, its there that you would suspect and find your malady, and there that you would most solicitously seek the cure. BY

BY this time, if you are willing, you may see, where lyeth the disease and misery of the world and also what must be the cure. Man hath *lost himself*, by *seeking* himself: He hath lost *himself* in the losse of *God*. He departed from *God*, that he might enjoy *himself*: and so is estranged from *God* and *himself*. He left the *Sun*, and retired into *darkness*, that he might behold *himself*, and *not* the *Light*; and now beholdeth neither *himself* nor the *light*: For he can not behold *himself* but *by the Light*. As if the *Body* should forsake the *Soul* and say, I will no longer serve another, but will be my own: what would such a *selfish* separation procure but the converting of a *Body* into a loathsome Carcass, and a senseless clod? Thus hath the *Soul* dejected it selfe, by turning *to it self*, and seperating from *God*: without whom it hath neither *Life*, nor *Light* nor *Joy*. By desiring a selfish kind of *Knowledge* of *Good* and *evill*, withdrawing from its just dependance upon *God*, it hath involved it self in *Care* and *misery*, and lost the quieting delighting *Knowledge* which it had in *God*. And now poor man is lost in er-

ror: He is stragled so farre from home; that he knoweth not where he is, nor which way to returne, till Christ in mercy seeke and save him, *Math.* 18. 11. *Luk.* 19. 10.

Yet could we but get men to *know* that they *do not know themselves*, there were the greater hope of their recovery. But this is contrary to the nature of their distemper. An eye that is blinded by a suffusion or Cataract, seeth not the *thing* that *blindeth it*: It is the *same Light* that must shew them *themselves*, and their *ignorance of themselves*: Their *self-ignorance* is part of the *self-evill* which they have to know. Those troubled souls that complain that they *know not themselves*, doe shew that they *begin* at least to *know themselves*. But a Pharisee will say [*Are we blind also?*] *Joh.* 9. 40, They are *too blind* to *know that they are blind*. The Gospell shall be rejected, the Apostles persecuted, Christ himself abused and put to death, the Nation ruined, themselves and their posterity undone by the Blindness of these Hypocrites, before they will *perceive* that they *are Blind*, and that they know not God or themselves. Alas the long calamities of the Church, the distempers and confusions in the state,
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the lamentable divisions and dissensions among believers, have told the world, how little most men know themselves; and yet they themselves will not perceive it. They tell it aloud to all about them, by their self-conceitedness and cruelty, uncharitable censures, reproaches and impositions, that *they know not themselves*, and yet you cannot make *them* know it. Their *afflicted brethren* feel it to their smart; the *suffering grieved Churches* feel it; thousands *groan* under it, that never wronged them: and yet you cannot make them *feel it*.

Did they well know themselves to be *Men*, so many would not use themselves like beasts; and care so little for their most noble part. Did they know themselves aright to be *but Men*, so many would not set up themselves as Gods: They would not arrogate a Divine authority in the matters of God, and the Consciences of others, as the Roman Prelats do: Nor would they desire so much that the observation, reverence, admiration, love and applause of all should be turned upon them; nor be so *impatient* when they seem to be neglected; nor make so great a matter of their wrongs, as if it were some Deity that were injured.

O what a *change* it would make in the world, if men were brought to the *knowledge of themselves*? How many would *weep*, that now *laugh*, and live in mirth and pleasure? How many would lament their sin and misery, that now are Phari-
saically confident of their integrity? How many would seek to faithfull Ministers for advice, and enquire what they should do to be *saved*, that now deride them, and scorn their counsell, and cannot bear their plain reproof or come not near them? How many would ask directions for the cure of their unbelief, and pride and sensuality, that now take little notice of any such sins within them? How many would cry day and night for mercy, and beg importunately for the life of their immortall souls, that now take up with a few words of course instead of serious fervent prayer? Doe but once know *your selves* aright, know what you are, and what you have done, and what you want, and what's your danger; and then be prayerless and careless if you can: Then sit still and trifle out your time, and make a jeast of holy diligence, and put God off with lifeless words and complements if you can. Men could not thinke so lightly
and

and contemptuously of Christ, so unworthily and falsely of a holy life, so delightfully of sin, so carelessly of Duty, so fearlessly of Hell, so senselessly and atheistically of God, and so disregardfully of Heaven, as now they do, if they did but thoroughly know themselves.

ANd now, Sirs, me thinks, your consciences should begin to stir, and your thoughts should be turned inwards upon your selves, and you should seriously consider, what measure of acquaintance you have at home, and what *you have done* to procure and maintain such acquaintance. Hath Conscience no Use to make of this *Doctrine*, and of all that hath been said upon it? Doth it not *reprove* you for your self neglect, and your wanderings of mind, and your aliene, unnecessary fruitless Cogitations? Had you been but as strange to your familiar *friend*, and as regardless of his acquaintance, correspondence and affaires, as too many of you have been of your *Own*, you may imagine how he would have taken it, and what Use he would have made of it: some such Use it beseemeth you to make of estrangement

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edness to your selves. Would not he ask, [What is the matter that my friend so seldom looketh at me? and no more mindeth me or my affaires? What have I done to him? How have I deserved this? What more beloved company or employment hath he got?] You have this and much more to plead against your great Neglect and Ignorance of your selves.

In order to your *conviction* and *reformation*, I shall first shew you some of those Reasons, that should move you to *Know your selves*, and consequently should humble you for neglecting it: and then I shall shew you, what are the *Hinderances* that keep men from self-acquaintance, and give you some *Directions* necessary to attain it.

In generall consider, it is by the Light of knowledge that all the affairs of your souls must be directed: And therefore *while you know not your selves, you are in the dark, and unfit to manage your own affairs.* your *Principall* error about *your selves* will have influence into all the transactions of your lives, you will neglect the greatest duties, and abuse and corrupt those which you think you do performe.

While

While you know not yourselves, you know not *what you do*, nor *what you have to do*, and therefore can do nothing well. For instance.

1. When you should *Repent of sin*, you know it not as *in yourselves*, and therefore cannot *savingly Repent* of it. If you know in *generall*, that you are sinners, or know your *gross* and *crying sins*, which Conscience cannot overlook, yet the sins which you know not because you will not know them, may condemne you. How can you Repent of your Pride, Hypocrisie, Self-love, Self-seeking, your Want of love and feare, and trust in God, or any such sins which you never did observe? Or if you perceive some sins, yet if you perceive not that they reign and are predominant, and that you are in a state of sin, how can you Repent of that estate which you perceive not? Or if you have but a sleight and superficiall sight of your sinfull state and your particular sins, you can have but a superficiall false Repentance.

2. If you *know not yourselves*, you cannot be *duely sensible of your misery*. Could it be expected that the *Pharisees* should lament, that they *were of their Father the Devil*, as long as they boasted that they
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were the *Children of God*? *Joh. 8. 41, 44.* Will they lament that they are under the wrath of God, the curse of the Law, and the bondage of the Devill, that know not of any such misery that they are in, but hope they are the heirs of heaven? What think you is the reason, that when Scripture telleth us that few shall be saved, and none at all but those that are new creatures, and have the Spirit of Christ, that yet there is not one of many that is sensible that *the case is theirs*? Though Scripture peremptorily concludeth, that *They that are in the flesh cannot please God*, and that *To be carnally minded is death*, *Rom, 8. 6, 7, 8.* and that *Without holyness none shall see God*, *Heb. 12. 14.* and that all *They shall be damned that believe not the truth but have pleasure in unrighteousness*, *2 Thes. 2. 12.* and that *Christ will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that do believe.* *2 Thes. 1. 7, 8, 9, 10.* And would not a man think that such words as these should waken the guilty

guilty soul that doth *believe them* ? and make us all to look about us ? I confess it is no wonder, if a *flat Atheist* or *Infidel* should sleight them and deride them ! But is it not a wonder if they stir not those, that *profess to believe* the word of God, and are the men of whom these Scriptures speak. And yet among a thousand that are thus *condemned already* ; (I say, by the word, that is the *Rule of Judgement* even *condemned already* ; For so God saith, *Joh. 3. 18.*) how few shall you see that with penitent tears lament their misery ? How few shall you hear, with true remorse, complain of their spiritual distress, and cry out as those that were pricked at the heart, *Act. 2. 37.* Men and Brethren, what shall we do ? In all this Congregation, how few hearts are affected with so miserable a case ? Do you see by the *tears*, or hear by the *complaints* of those about you, that they know what it is, to be *unpardoned sinners, under the wrath of the most holy God* ! And what is the matter that there is no more such lamentation ? Is it because there are few or none so miserable ? Alas ! no. The Scripture, and their worldly, fleshly, and ungodly lives, assure us of the contrary. But it is because men are *strangers to themselves*.
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They little think that its *themselves*, that all the terrible threatnings of God do mean. Most of them little believe or consider, *what Scripture saith* ; But fewer consider *what Conscience hath to say within*, when once it is awakened, and the curtain is drawn back, and the light appeareth. The first Proposition inferreth not the conclusion; And the Assumption they overlook. Did all that read and hear the Scriptures *know themselves*, I'll tell you how they would hear and read it. When the Scripture saith, [*To be carnally minded is death: and if ye live after the flesh ye shall dye,*] Rom. 8. 8, 13. the guilty hearer would say [*I am carnally minded: and I live after the flesh: therefore I must Turn or Die.*] When the Scripture saith [*Where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also*] Mat. 6. 21. The guilty conscience would assume [*My heart is not in Heaven, therefore my treasure is not there.*] When Scripture saith [*Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,* Matth. 18. 3. and *Except a man be regenerate and born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God,* John 3. 3, 5. and [*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold* all

all things are become new, 2 Cor. 5. 17. and [If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his, Rom. 8. 9.] The guilty hearer would assume [I was never thus converted, regenerate, born again, and made a new creature : I have not the Spirit of Christ : therefore I am none of his, and cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, till this change be wrought upon me.] When the Scripture saith [Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge, Heb. 13. 4.] The guilty hearer would say, [How then shall I be able to stand before him ?]

Yea, did but Hearers know themselves, they would perceive their danger from remoter principles, that mention the dealing of God with others. When they hear of the judgement of God upon the ungodly, & the enemies of the Church, they would say [Except I Repent, I shall likewise perish] Luke 13. 3, 5. When they hear that [Judgement must begin at the house of God] They would infer [What then shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of God ?] And when they hear that [The Righteous are scarcely saved] They would think [Where then shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ?] 1 Pet. 4. 17, 18.

3. If you know not your selves, you cannot be Christians : you cannot have a pra-

tical belief in Christ: For he is offered to you in the Gospel, as the *remedy for your Misery*; as the *ransome for your enthralled souls*; as the *propitiation for your sin*, and your *peace-maker* with the Father; without whose merit, satisfaction, righteousness, and intercession, your guilty souls can have no hope. And can you savingly value him in these respects, if you know not that sin and misery, that guilt and thralldom, in which your need of Christ consisteth? Christ is esteemed by you according to the judgement you pass upon *your selves*.

They that say *they are sinners*, from a general brain-knowledge, will accordingly say *Christ is their Saviour and their hope*, with a superficial Belief, and will honour him with their lips with all the titles belonging to the *Redeemer* of the world: But they that *feel* that they are deadly sick of sin at the very heart, and are lost for ever if he do not save them, will *feel* what the name of a Saviour signifieth, and will look to him as the Israelites to the brazen Serpent, and cast themselves at his feet, for the crumbs of grace, and will yield up themselves to be saved by him, in his way. An *uneffectual knowledge of your selves*, may make you believe in a *Reacemer*, as *all the City* do of a

Learned

Learned able Physicion, that will speak well of his skill, and resolve to use him when necessity constraineth them, but at present they find no such necessity. But an *effectual sight* and *sense* of your condition, will bring you to Christ, as a man in a *Drop sic* or *Consumption* comes to the Physicion, that feels he must have help or die. Saith Bernard, [*Filium Dei non reputat Jesum, qui ipsius non terretur comminationibus, &c.*] You will not take the Son of God for a Saviour, if you be not affrighted by his threatnings] And if you perceive not that you are lost, you will not heartily thank him that came to seek and save you. [*Non consolantur Christi lacrymae cachinnantes, non consolantur panni ejus ambulantes in stolis; non consolantur stabulum & praesepe amantes primas Cathedras in Synagogis.*] saith Bernard [*Christs tears do not comfort them that laugh: his rags do not comfort them that (love to) walk in robes: his stable and manger comfort not them that love the highest seats in the Synagogues.*] Can you seek to Christ to take you up, till you find that you have fallen and hurt you? Will you seek to him to fetch you from the gates of hell, that find not that you are there?

But to the self-condemning soul that know-

ethit self, how wellcome would a Saviour
 be? How ready is such a soul for Christ?
 Thou that *judgest thy self* art the person
 that must come to Christ to *Justifie*
thee. Now thou art ready to be healed
 by him, when thou findest that thou art
 sick, and dead: Hast thou received the
sentence of death in thy self? Come to him
 now and *thou shalt have life*, *John 5. 40.*
1 John 5. 11. Art thou weary and heavy
 laden? Come to him for rest: Come and
 fear not; for he *bidst thee come*, *Matthew 11.*
27, 28. Dost thou know that *thou hast*
sinned against Heaven and before God, and
art not worthy to be called a Son? Do but
 cast thy self then at his feet, and tell him
 so, and ask forgiveness, and try whether he
 will not welcome and embrace thee, pardon
 and entertain thee, cloth thee and feast
 thee, and rejoyce over thee as one that
was lost, and is found, was dead, and is alive,
Luke 15. For he came to seek and to save
that which was lost, *Luke 19 10.* While thou
 saidst, *I am rich and increased in goods, and*
have need of nothing, and knewest not that
thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor,
and blind and naked; thou wouldst not buy
 the tryed Gold that thou mightest be rich, nor
 his whitercyment that thou mightest be cloath-
 ed,

ed, that the shame of thy nakedness might not appear ; nor Christs eye salve that thou mightest see, Rev. 3. 17, 18. But now thou art poor in Spirit, and findest that thou art nothing, and hast nothing, and of thy self canst do nothing that is acceptably good. John 15. 5. and that of thy self thou art insufficient to think any thing that is good, 2 Cor. 3. 5. now thou art readier for the help of Christ, and a patient fit for the tender healing hand of the Physicion. Whilst thou saidst, *God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, nor as this Publican, thou wast further from Christ and Justification, then now thou standest as afar off and darest scarce look up to heaven, but smitest on thy breast and saist, Lord be mercifull to me a sinner,* Luke 18. 11, 12, 13, 14. Not that extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or any that are ungodly, are justified or can be saved, while they are such : Nor that a smiting on the breast, with a [*Lord be mercifull to me a sinner*] will serve their turn while they continue in their wicked lives : But when thou art brought to accuse and condemn thy self, thou art prepared for his grace that must renew and justifie thee. None sped better with Christ, then the woman that confest her self a dog, and begged but for

the *childrens crumbs* : And the Centurion that sent friends to Christ to mediate for him, and as being unworthy to come himself, and unworthy that Christ should enter under his roof : For of the first Christ said [*O woman, great is thy faith : be it unto thee even as thou wilt*] Mat. 15. 27, 28. And of the second he saith with admiration [*I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel, Luke 7. 6, 7, 8, 9.*] Though thou art ready to deny the title of a child, and to number thy self with the dogs, yet go to him and beg his crumbs of mercy. Though thou think that Christ will not come to such a one as thou, and though thou beg prayers of others, as thinking he will not hear thy own, thou little thinkest how this self-abasement and self-denial prepareth thee for his tenderest mercies, and his esteem. When thou art contrite (as the dust that's trodden underfeet) and poor, and tremblest at the Word, then will he look at thee with compassion and respect, Isa. 66. 2. [*For thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy ; I dwell in the high and holy place : with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones : For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be alwayes wroth,*

wroth; for the Spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made, Isa. 57. 15. When thou art using the self-condemning words of Paul, Rom. 7. 14. to 25. [*I am carnal, sold under sin: what I would, that do I not; and what I hate, that do I. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing — I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. ----- A Law in my members warring against the Law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the Law of sin —*] when thou criest out with him [*O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me, from the body of this death;*] thou art then fitter to look to thy Redeemer, and use the following words [*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*] When thou didst exalt thy self, thou wast obnoxious to the stormes of Justice, which was engaged to bring thee low: But now thou *humblest thy self*, thou liest in the way of Mercy, that is engaged to *exalt thee*, Luke 14. 11. & 18. 14. Mercy looketh downward, and can quickly spie a sinner in the dust; but cannot leave him there, nor deny him compassion and relief. Art thou cast out as helpless, wounded by thy sin, and neglected by all others that pass by? Thou art the fittest object for the skill

and mercy of him that washeth sinners in his blood, and tenderly bindeth up their wounds, and undertakes the perfecting of the cure, though yet thou must bear the Surgeons hand, till his time of perfect cure become, *Luke 10. 33, 34, 35.* Now thou perceivest the *greatness* of thy sin and misery, thou art fit to study the greatness of his mercy: & with *all Saints* (to strive) to comprehend, what is the breadth, & length, & depth, & height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, *Ephes. 3. 18, 19.* Now thou hast smitten upon the thigh, and said, *What have I done? Jerem. 31. 19. & 8. 6.* thou art fitter to look unto him that was wounded and smitten for thy transgressions, and to consider what he hath done, and suffered: how he hath born thy grief and carried thy sorrows, and was bruised for thy iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him, and we are healed by his stripes: *All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all, Isa. 53. 4, 5, 6, &c.* Art thou in doubt whether there be any forgiveness for thy sins? and whether there be any place for Repentance? Remember that Christ is exalted by Gods right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour

Saviour, to give Repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins Act. 5. 31. And that he himself hath spoken it, that [All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men,] except the Blasphemy against the Spirit. Math. 12. 32. And this Forgiveness of sins thou art bound to believe as an Article of thy Creed: that it is purchased by Christ, and freely offered in the Gospell. Mercy did but wait all this while, till thou wast brought to understand the want and worth of it, that it might be thine. When a Peter that denyeth Christ with oaths and cursing, goeth out and weepeth, he speedily finds mercy from him without, that he but now denyed within. When so bloody a persecuter as Paul findeth mercy, upon his prostration and confession; and when so great an offender as Manasseh is forgiven upon his penitence, in bonds; when all his witchcraft, Idolatry and cruelties are pardoned, upon a repentance that might seeme to have been forced by a grievous scourge; what sinner that perceives his sin and misery, can question his entertainment if he come to Christ. Come to him sinner, with thy load and burden; Come to him with all thy acknowledged unworthyness: and try whether he will re-

refuse thee. He hath professed that [*Him that cometh to him, he will in no wise cast out*] Joh. 6. 37. He refused not his very murderers, when they were pricked at the heart and enquired after a remedie, Act. 2. 37. And will he refuse thee? Hath our Phyficion poured out his blood to make a medicine for distracted sinners? and now is he unwilling to work the cure? [*Fusus est sanguis medici, & factum est medicamentum frenetici*] saith *Augustine*. O finer! now thou art brought to know thy self, know Christ also, and the cure is done. Let thy thoughts of the Remedie be deeper and larger and longer then all thy thoughts of thy Misery? It is thy sin and shame if it be not so: Why wilt thou have twenty thoughts of sin and misery, for one that thou hast of Christ and mercy? when mercy is so large and great and wonderfull as to triumph over misery: and Grace aboundeth much more where sin hath abounded, Rom, 5. 20. [*Inspice vulnera pendentis; sanguinem morientis; pretium redimentis; cicatrices resurgentis. Caput habet inclinatum ad osculandum; cor apertum ad diligendum; brachia extensa ad amplexandum, totum corpus expositum ad redimendum*] saith *Augustin*. [*Behold the wounds of Christ as he is hanging*

ing; the blood of him dying, the price of him redeeming, the scars of him rising. His Head is bowed to Kiss thee: his heart open to love thee; his arms open to embrace thee; his whole body exposed to redeem thee.]

[*Homo factus est hominis Factor; utingeret ubera regens sydera; ut esuriret Panis; ut fiteret Fons; dormiret Lux; ab itinere via fatigaretur; falsis testibus Veritas occultaretur; Index vivorum & mortuorum à iudice mortali judicaretur; ab injustis iustitia damneretur; flagellis disciplina caderet; spinis botrus coronaretur; in ligno fundamentum suspenderetur; virtus infirmaretur; salus vulneraretur; vita moreretur*] saith Aug. that is, [The Maker of man was made man; that he might suck the breasts that rules the starrs; that Bread might hunger; the Spring (or fountain) might thirst; the Light might sleep; the Way might be weary in his journey; that the Truth might be hidden by false witnesses: That the Judge of quick and dead might be judged by a mortal judge: Justice might be condemned by the unjust; Discipline might be scourged; the Cluster of grapes might be crowned with thorns; the Foundation might be hanged on a tree; that Strength might be weakned; that Health might be wounded:

wounded ; and that Life it self might dye.]
 This is the wonderfull myltery of Love,
 which will entertain the soul that comes
 to Christ, and which thou must *study* to
know when thou *knowest thy self*. But *till*
then all these will be *riddles*, to thee, or
little relished : and Christ will seem to thy
 neglecting heart to have dyed and done all
 this in vain.

And hence it is, that as proud, ungodly
 sensuall men, were never *sound Believers*, so
 they oft-times fall from that *opinionative*
common faith which they had, and of all men
 do most easily turn Apostates; It being
 just with God that they should be so far
 forsaken as to vilifye the remedie, that
would not know their sin & misery, but love
 it and pertinaciously hold it as their felicity.

4. If you *Know not your selves*, you
will not know what to do with your selves,
nor to what end and for what work you are to
live. This makes the Holy work neglected,
 and most men live to little purpose, wasting
 their daies in matters that *them selves* will
 call *impertinent* when they come to die : as
 if they were good for nothing else. Whereas
 if they *knew them selves*, they would
 know that they are made and fitted
 for more noble workes. O man, if thou
 were

were acquainted well with thy *faculties* and *frame*, thou wouldest perceive the *Name of God thy Maker*, to be so deeply engraven in thy nature, even in all thy parts and powers, as should Convince thee that thou wast made for *him*; that all thou *art* and all thou *hast*, is *nothing worth*, but for *his service*: As all the parts and motions of a *clock* or *watch*, are but to tell the *hour of the day*. Thou wouldest know then the meaning of *Sanctification* and *Holiness*: that it signifyeth but the *Giving God his own*; and is the *first part of Justice*; without which, no rendering *men their due* can prove thee *Just*: Thou wouldest then know the *unreasonableness* and *injustice* of *ungodlyness* and *all sin*: And that to serve thy fleshly lusts and pleasures with those noble faculties that were purposely formed to love and serve the *Eternall God*, is more *absurd* and *villainous*, then to employ the highest officers of the *King*, in the sweeping of your chimneys, or the serving of your swine. Remember it, unreasonable, brutish man, the next time thou art going to thy lusts and sensuall delights. It is no wiser a course thou takest: It is no more honorable or just: but as much worse, as *God*
is

is to be preferred to a *King*; and as thy *sin* is worse then the serving of thy swine. O man, didst thou but know thy self and for what employment thy facultyes are made, thou wouldst lift up thy head, and seriously think, *who* holds the reins? *who* keeps thy breath yet in thy nostrills, and continueth thee in life? And *where* it is that thou must shortly fix thy unchangeable abode; And what is *now* to be done in preparation for such a day? *Os homini sublime dedit*, &c. Thou wouldst know that thou hadst not that *Reason*, and that *will* and *executive power*, to rowl in the earth, and be but a *cunning kind of beast*, that hath wit to play the fool, and can ingeniously live *below understanding*; and do that *with argument* which other bruits can do *without it*: Thou wouldst know that thy *higher faculties* were not made to serve the *lower*: thy *Reason* to serve thy *sensuall delight*: the *horse* was not made to *ride the man*, nor the *master* to follow and attend the *dog*. O man! hadst thou not lost the *Knowledge of thy self*, thou wouldst be so far from *wondering at a Holy life*, that thou wouldst look upon an *unholy person* as a *monster*, and wouldst hear the deriders and opposers of a holy life, as thou wouldst hear

hear him that were deriding a man because he is not a swine, or were reproaching men of honor and learning, because they live not as an *Ass*.

I confess, my soul is too apt to lose its lively sense of all these things: But when ever it is awake, I am forc'd to say, in these kind of meditations, [If I had not a God to know and think on, to Love and honor, to seek and serve, what had I to do with my understanding, will and all my powers? What should I do with life and time? What use should I make of Gods provisions? What could I find to do in the World, that is worthy of a man? Were it not as good lie still, and sleep out my daies and professedly do nothing, as to go dreaming with a seeming seriousness, and wander about the world as in my sleep, and do nothing with such a troublesome stir, as sensuall worldly persons do? Could not I have plaid the beast without a Reasonable free-working soul? Let them turn from God, and neglect the conduct of the Redeemer, and disregard the holy approaches and breathings and workings of the soul towards its beloved Center and felicity, that know not what an immortal soul is, or know how els to employ their facultyes, with satisfaction or content

content unto themselves. I profess here as in his presence that is the Father of spirits, and before Angels and men, I do not, I know not what els to do with my soul that's worth the doing, but what is subservient to its proper object, its end and everlasting Rest. If the Holy service of God and the preparation for Heaven, and making after Christ and happiness, be forbidden me, I have no more to do in the world, that will satisfie my *Reason*, or satisfie my *affections*, or that as a *man* or a *Christian* I can *own*. And its as good *not live*, as to be deprived of the *uses* and the *ends* of *Life*. Though my *Love* and *Desires* are infinitely below the *Eternall Goodness*, and *Glory*, which they should prosecute and embrace, yet do my *little tastes*, and *dull desires*, and *cold affections* consent unfeignedly to say, *Let me have God or nothing: Let me know him and his will, and what will please him, and how I may enjoy him: or O that I had never had an understanding to know anything! Let me remember him; or O that I had never had a memory! Let me Love him and be beloved of him; or O that I had never had such a thing as Love within me! Let me hear his teachings, or have no ears: Let me serve him*
with

with my riches, or let me have none: and with any interest and honour, or let me be despised.] Its Nothing that he gives not Being to: And its Useless that is not for his Glory and his will. If God have nothing to do with me, I have nothing to do with myself, nor the world hath nothing to do with me.

Let dark and dreaming, doating sinners declare their shame, and speak evill of what they never knew, and neglect the Good they never saw; let them that know not themselves or God, refuse to give up themselves to God, and think a life of sensuality more suitable to them. But Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance on me. Psal. 4. and let me no longer be a man, nor have Reason or any of thy talents in my trust, then I shall be Thine, and live to Thee. I say as Bernard [*Dignus plane est morte, qui tibi Christe recusat vivere; & qui tibi non sapit, desipit; & qui curat esse nisi propter te, pro nihilo est & nihil est. Propter te ipsum Deus fecisti omnia; & qui esse vult sibi, & non tibi, nil esse incipit inter omnia.*] [Worthy is that man, O Christ, to die, that refuseth to live to thee: and he that is not wise to thee, is but a fool; and he that careth to Be un-

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less it be for thee, is good for nothing, and is nothing. For thy self O God hast thou made all things; and he that would Be to himself and not thee, among all things begineth to be Nothing.]

5. If you know not your selves, you know not how to apply the word of God, which you read or heare; you know not how to use either promises or threatnings, to the benefit of your soules: Nay you will misapply them to your hurt. If you are unregenerate and know it not, you will put by all the calls of God, that invite you to come in and be converted, and think that they belong to grosser sinners, but not to you. All the descriptions of the *unsanctified* and their *misery*, will little affect you; and all Gods *threatnings* to such will little move you; for you will think they are not meant of *you*; you will be Pharisaically *blessing your selves* when you should be *pricked at the heart* and laid in *Contrition* at the feet of Christ: you will be thanking God that you are not *such* as indeed *you are*; you will be making application of the *threatnings* to *others*, and pittyng *them* when you should lament *your selves*; you will be *thundering* when you should be *trembling*; and speaking that evill of *others* that

that is your *owne*; and *convincing others* of that which you had need to be *convinc- ed of*; and *wakening others* by talking in *your sleepe*; and calling other men hypocrites, proud, self conceited, ignorant and other such names that are indeed *your own*e; you will *read or heare your own*e *condemnation*, and *not be moved at it*, as not knowing your *own*e description when you heare it, but thinking that this thunder-bolt is levelled at another sort of men. All the words of Peace and Comfort, you will think are meant of such as you. When you read of Pardon, Reconciliation, Adoption, and right to everlasting Life, you will imagine that all these are yours. And thus you will be *dreaming-rich and safe*, when you are *poore and miserable*, and in the greatest *perill*. And is it not pittie that the celestially undeeving *Light* should be abused to so dangerous *selfdeceit*? and that *Truth* itself should be made the furtherance of so great an *error*? And that the *eyesalve* should more *put out your eyes*? Is it not sad to consider that you should now be *emboldened to presumption*, by that very word which (unless you be converted) will judge you to damnation? And that *self-deceit* should be *increased*, by the

glass of verity that should undeceive you?

How can you know what *promise* or *threatning* doth belong to you, while you know not what state your souls are in: Can you tell what *Physick* to take, till your *disease* be known? or choose your *plaster* till you know your *sore*?]

6. If you know not yourselves, you know not how to confess or pray. This makes men *Confess* their *sins* so seldome and with so little remorse to God and man; you *hide* them because they are *bidden from yourselves*; and therefore God will open them to your shame: whereas if they were opened to you, they would be opened by you, and covered by God. Saith Augustine [*Non operui, sed aperui ut operires; Non calavi, ut tegeres: Nam quando homo detegit, Deus tegit. Cum homo calat, Deus nudat: Cum homo agnoscit, Deus ignoscit*] [*I did not cover, but open that thou maist cover: I concealed not, that thou mightst hide. For when man discloseth, God covereth: When man hideth, God maketh bare: when man confesseth, God forgiveth.*] For want of *self-acquintance* it is that men hypocritically confess to God in a way of custome, the sins which they will deny or excuse to man; and will tell God formally
of

of much, which they cannot endure to be told of seriously by a reprover: or if they confess it generally with a seeming humility to others, they cannot beare that another should faithfully charge it upon them, in order to their true humiliation and amendment [*Indicia vera confessionis sunt, si ut unusquisque se peccatorem dicit, id de se dicenti alteri non contradicat. Nam non peccator sed justus videri appetit, cum peccatorem se quisque nullo arguente confitetur; superbia quippe vitium est, ut quod de se fateri quis sua sponte dignatur, hoc sibi dici ab aliis dedignetur*] saith Bernard. [It is the signe of true Confession if, as every one saith he is a sinner, he contradict not another that saith it of him. For he desireth not to seeme a sinner, but Righteous, when one confesseth himself a sinner when none reproveth him. It is the vice of Pride for a man to disdain to have that spoken to him of others, which he stuck not to confess of his own accord concerning himself.]

And for prayer, it is mens ignorance of themselves that makes prayer so little in request: Hunger best teacheth men to beg. You would be ofter on your knees, if you were ofter in your hearts. Prayer would not seem needless, if you knew your needs. Know your

your selves and be prayerless if you can. When the Prodigal was convinced, he presently purposeth to *Confess* and *Pray*. When *Paul* was converted, *Ananias* hath this evidence of it from God [*Behold he prayeth*] Act. 9. 11. Indeed the inward part of prayer, is the motion of a returning soul to God : saith *Hugo* [*Oratio est pia mentis & humilis ad Deum conversio, fide, spe, & charitate subnixta.*] Prayer is the turning of a pious humble soul to God, leaning upon faith, hope and love.] It is [*Oranti subsidium, Deo sacrificium, demonibus flagellum*] The relief of the *Petitioner*, the sacrifice of God, the scourge of Devils.]

And self-knowledge would teach men how to pray. Your own hearts would be the best *Prayer-books* to you, if you were skillfull in reading them. Did you see what *sin* is, and in what *Relation* you stand to God, to *Heaven* and *Hell*, it would drive you above your beads and lifeless words of course, and make you know that to pray to God for pardon and salvation, is not a work for a sleepy soul : saith *Gregory*, [*Ille Deo veram Orationem exhibet qui semetipsum cognoscit, quia pulvis sit ; humiliter videt, qui nihil sibi virtutis tribuit, &c.*] He offereth the truest prayer to God, that

knoweth

knoweth himself, that humbly seeth he is but dust, and ascribeth not vertue to himself, &c.] Nothing quencheth prayer more, then to be mistaken or mindless about our selves. When we go from home, this fire goes out; But when we return, and search our hearts, and see the sins, the wants, the weakneses that are there, and perceive the danger that is before us, and withall the glorious hopes that are offered us, here's fuell and bellows to enflame the soul, and cure it of its drowsiness and dumbness. Help any sinner to a clearer light to see into his heart and life, and to a livelier sense of his own condition, and I warrant you he will be more disposed to fervent prayer, and will better understand the meaning of those words, *Luke 18. 1.* [*That men ought alwayes to pray and not to faint.*] and *1 Thes. 5. 17.* *Pray without ceasing.*] You may hear some impious persons now disputing against frequent and fervent prayer, and saying, *What need all this ado?* But if you were able to open these mens eyes, and shew them what is within them and before them, you would quickly answer all their arguments, and convince them better then words can do, and put an end to the dispute. You would set all the prayerless families in Town and

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The Mischief of Self-ignorance,

Country, Gentlemens and poor mens, on fervent calling upon God, if you could but help them to such a sight of their sin and danger, as shortly the stoutest of them must have. Why do they pray, and call for prayers, when they come to die, but that they begin a little better to know themselves? They see then that youth and health and honour are not the things, nor make them not so happy, as befooling prosperity once perswaded them. Did they believe and consider what God saith of them, and not what flattery and self-love say, it would open the mouths of them that are most speechless. But those that are *born deaf*, are alwayes *dumb*. How can they *speak* that language with *desire to God*, which they never *learn't* by *faith from God* or by *knowledge of themselves*?

And self-knowledge would teach men *what to ask*. They would feel *most need* of *spiritual mercies*, and beg hardest for them; and for *outward things*, they would ask but for their *daily bread*; and not be foolishly importunate with God for that which they know not to be suitable or good for them. [*Fideliter supplicans Deo pro necessitatibus hujus vite, & miserecorditer auditur, & miserecorditer non auditur.*

Quid

Quid enim infirmo sit utilius magis novit medicus quam egrotus] saith *Prosper*. Its mercy to be denied sometimes when we pray for outward things : Our Physition, and not we must choose our Physick, and prescribe our diet.

And if men knew themselves, it would teach them on what terms to expect the hearing of their prayers. Neither to be accepted for their merits, nor yet to be accepted without that faith, and Repentance, and desire, that seriousness, humility, and sincerity of heart, which the very nature of Prayer to God doth contain or presuppose. He that nameth the name of Christ, must depart from iniquity, 2 Tim. 2. 19. and must wash himself and make him clean, and put away the evil of his doings from before the eyes of God, and cease to do evil, and learn to do well; Isa. 1. 16, 17. As knowing that though a *Simon Magnus* must Repent and Pray, Acts 8. 22. and the wicked in forsaking his way, and thoughts, and returning to the Lord, must seek him while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near] Isa. 55. 6, 7. and the prayers of a humbled Publican are heard, when he sets his prayer against his sins; Yet if he would cherish his sin by prayer, and flatter himself into a presumption

presumption and security in a wicked life, because he useth to ask God forgiveness; if he thus regard iniquity in his heart, God will not hear his prayers, Psal. 66. 18. and we know that such impenitent sinners God heareth not, John 9. 31. And thus the prayers of the wicked as wicked, (which are not a withdrawing from his wickedness, but a bolster of his security, and as a craving of protection and leave to sin) are but an abomination to the Lord, Prov. 17. 8. & 28 9. *Ferrum prius extrahendum*, The bullet, the thorn must be first got out, before any medicine can heal their wounds. Saith Augustine [*Plus Deo placet latratus canum, mugitus bovm, grunnitus porcorum, quam cantus clericorum luxuriantium*] [The barking of dogs, the lowing of beasts, the grunting of swine, doth please God better then the singing of luxuriant Clergymen.] Did men know themselves, and who they have to do with in their prayers, they would not go from Cards, and Dice, and gluttony, and fornication, and railing, lying or reviling at the servants of the Lord, to a few hypocritical words of prayer, to salve all till the next time, and wipe their mouths, as if one sin had procured the forgiveness of another. Nor would they shut up a day
of

of worldliness, ambition, Sensuality or profaneness, with a few heartless words of confession and supplication; or with the words of penitence while their hearts are impenitent, as if when they have abused God by sin, they would make him amends or reconcile him by their mockery. Nor would they think to be accepted by *Praying for that* which they would not have; for holiness when they hate it, and for deliverance from the sins which they would not be delivered from; and would not have their prayers granted.

7. If you know not your selves, it will unfit you for Thanksgiving: Your greatest Mercies will be least esteemed: And the lesser will be misesteemed: And while you are unthankfull for what you have, you will be absurdly thanking God for that which indeed you have not.

What inestimable Mercies are daily trodden under feet by sinners, that know not their worth, because they know not their own necessities! They have Time to Repent, and make preparation for an endless life: But they know not the worth of it, but unthankfully neglect it, and cast it away on the basest vanities: As if worldly cares, or wicked company, or fleshly lusts, or Cards or Dice
or

or revellings, or idleness, were exercises in which they might better improve it, then the works of Holiness, Justice and Mercy, which God hath made the business of their lives. Or as if the profits, and pleasures and vain glory of this world, did better deserve it, then their Creator, and their own souls, and the Heavenly inheritance. But if their eyes were opened to see where they stand, and what they are, and what are their dangers and necessities, how thankful would they be for one year, one moneth, one day, one hour to Repent and cry to God for Mercy ! and how sensibly would they perceive that a *hundred years time* is not *too long*, to spend in serious preparation for eternity ?

They have now the *faithfull Ministers of Christ*, inviting them in his name to come to him and receive the riches of his grace, and *beseeching them in his stead to be reconciled unto God*, (*Mat. 22. 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20.*) But they stop their ears, and harden their hearts, and stiffen their necks, and love not to be disturbed in their sins, but are angry with those that are solicitous for their salvation, and revile them as too precise and strict, that tell them of the *One thing needfull*, and perswade them to choose

choose the better part, and tell them where their sin will leave them. They take *them* for their *friends* that will *encourage* them in the way that *God condemneth*, and be *merry* with them in the way to endless *sorrow*, and flatter them into security and impenitency till the time of grace be past; but they hate them as their enemies that faithfully reprove them, and tell them of their folly, and call them to a safer better way. Alas, Sirs, there would not be so many *Nations, Congregations, and Souls now* left in darkness and misery by their *own doing*, having driven away the Mercy of the Gospel, and thrust their faithfull Teachers from them, if they *knew themselves*. Men would not triumph in their own calamity, when they have expelled their faithfull Teachers, (the *dust* of whose feet, the *sweat* of their brows, the *tears* of their eyes, and the fervent *prayers* and *groans* of their *hearts* must witness against them,) if they *knew themselves*. They would not be like a *mad man* that glorieth that he hath beaten away his Physician and his friends, and is left to himself, if they *knew themselves*. When they have the earnest Calls of the Word without, and convictions and urgings of the Spirit of God,
and

and their Consciencés within, they would not wilfully go on, and cast these mercies at their heels, if they *knew themselves*.

They have leave to joyn in the *Communion of Saints*, and to enjoy the benefit of holy *Society* in prayer, and conference, and mutual love and spiritual assistance, and in the publick worship of God : but they pass these by, as having more of *trouble* and *burden*, then of *mercy*, because they little *know themselves*.

And their *inferior Mercies* of *Health*, and *Wealth*, and *food*, and *rayment*, and *friends*, and *accommodations*, they *misesteem* and *misuse* : and value them but as *provision for the flesh*, and the satisfaction of their sensual and inordinate desires, and not as their *necessary provision for their duty* in the way to *Heaven* ! And therefore they are most thankfull for their greatest snares : For that honour and abundance which are stronger temptations, then they can overcome : For those fleshly contentments and delights, which are the enemies of grace, and the prison of their noblest faculties, and the undoing of their souls. If they *could for shame speak out*, they would thank God more for a whore, or a successful gain, or the favour of their earthen gods,

gods, or for preferment, or commodity, lands or houses, then ever they did for all the offers of Christ and grace, and all the invitations to a holy life. For there is much more joy and pleasure in their *hearts* for the *former* than the *latter*.

And *Self-ignorance* will also *corrupt* your *Thanksgiving*, and turn it into *sin* and *folly*. Is it not shame and pitty to hear an unpardoned enemy of Holiness, and of God, to thank God that he is *Justified* and *Reconciled* to God; and *Adopted* to be his child, and made a member of Jesus Christ? And to hear a carnal unregenerate person give thanks for his *Regeneration* and *Sanctification* by the *Holy Ghost*? As it is to hear a leper give thanks for perfect health, or a fool or mad man thank God for making him wiser then his neighbours. Is it not pitty to hear a miserable soul thank God for the Grace which he never had! and one that is near eternal misery to thank God for making him an heir of Glory! O how many have thankd God Pharisai- cally for the *pardon* of *their sins*, that must for ever *suffer* for *those sins*! How many have thanked him for giving them the *assured hopes* of *Glory*, that must be thrust out into *endless misery*! As I having known
many,

many, that by their friends and by themselves have been flattered into confident hopes of *life*, when they were ready to *die*, have thank't God that they were *pretty well*, and the *worst was past*; which in the eyes of judicious standers by, was not the least aggravation of their sad and deplorable state. Methinks it is one of the saddest spectacles in the world to hear a man thanking God for the *assurance of salvation*, that is in a *state of condemnation*, and like to be in Hell for ever! These absurdities could not corrupt your highest duties, and turn them into sin, if you *knew your selves*.

A man that *knoweth his own necessities and unworthiness*, is *thankfull for a little to God and man*. *Mercy is as no mercy*, where there is no sense of *need or misery*. [*Sapienti notum est quanti res quaq; taxanda sit*] saith *Seneca*. Therefore God useth to *humble them so low* in the work of *conversion*, whom he meaneth ever after to imploy in the magnifying of his grace. And then that which is *folly and hypocrisie* from a *Pharisee*, will be an *acceptable sacrifice* from a *humbled gratefull soul*; and he that by *Grace* is differenced from other men, may (modestly) thank God that he is not *as other men*.

men. For had he nothing more to thank God for, then the *ungodly world*, he would be rejected and perish with the *world*: And if he have more then the *world*, and yet be no more thankfull then the *world*, he would be guilty of greater *unthankfulness* then the *world*. [*Non est superbia elati, sed confessio non ingrati: & habere te cognosce, & nihil ex te habere; ut nec superbus sis, nec ingratus: Dic Deo tuo, quoniam sanctus sum quia sanctificasti me: quia accepi, non quæ habui; quia tu dedisti, non quæ ego merui*] saith *Augustine*, [*This is not the Pride of one lift up, but the acknowledgement of one thats not unthankfull: Know that thou hast, and know that thou hast nothing of thy self; that thou maist neither be proud, nor yet unthankfull. Say to thy God, I am holy, for thou hast sanctified me: for I have received what I had not; and thou hast given me what I deserved not.*] The *Thanksgiving* of a faithfull soul, is so far from being displeasing to God as a *Pharisaical* ostentation, that it is a great and excellent duty, and a most sweet and acceptable sacrifice, *Psal. 50. 14. 23. Offer unto God thanksgiving --- He that offereth praise, Glorifieth me.*]

8. And as to the *Lords Supper*, what work they are there like to make that are un-

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acquainted

acquainted with themselves, you may conjecture from the nature of the work, and the command of *self-examination* and *self-judging*. Though some may be wellcomed by Christ, that *have faith* and *love*, though they doubt of their *sincerity*, and *know not themselves* to be *children of God*; yet none can be welcome that *know not themselves* to be *sinners condemned* by the Law, and needing a Saviour to Reconcile and Justifie them. Who will be there humbled at the feet of Grace, and thankfull for a Redeemer, and hunger and thirst for Sacramental benefits, that knoweth not his own unworthiness and necessities? O what inestimable mercy would appear in a Sacrament to us, in the offers of Christ and saving grace, and communion with God and with his Saints, if our appetites were but quickned by the knowledge of our selves?

9. And I beseech you consider, whether *all your studies, and learning and employments, be not irrational, preposterous and impertinent*, while you study not first to *know your selves*? You are *nearest to your selves*, and therefore should be best acquainted with *your selves*. What should you more observe then the case of your own souls! and what should you know better then
whats

whats *within you*, and what you carry still about you, and that which methinks, you should alwayes feel? even the bent of your own estimations and affections; the sicknesses of your souls; your guilt, your wants and greatest necessities. All your *Learning* is but the concomitant of your *dotage* till you *know your selves*. Your wisest studies are but the workings of a distracted mind, while you *study not your selves*, and the things of everlasting consequence. The wise man was but derided by the standers by, that fell over head into a ditch, whilst he was busily taking the height of a Star. To study whether it be the Sun or *Earth* that *moveth*, and not consider what motion is predominant in *thy soul* and *life*, is a pittifull preposterous study: To think more what *stars* are in the *firmament*, then what *Grace* is in *thy heart*; and what *planet* reigneth, then what *disposition* reigneth in *thy self*; and whether the *Spirit* or *flesh* have the dominion, is but to be *learnedly besides thy self*.

*Illum ego jure
Despiciam, qui scit quanto sublimior Atlas*

*Omnibus in Lybia sit montibus ; hic tamen
idem
Ignoret quantum ferrata distet ab arca.*

Is it not a laborious madness to travail into far Countreys, and compass Sea and land, to satisfy a curiosity ; and to be at so much cost and pains to know the scituation, government, and manners, of the Cities and Countreys of the world , and in the meantime to be utterly strange at home, and never bestow one day or hour in a serious survey of heart and life ! To carry about a dark, unknown , neglected soul, while they are travelling to know remotest things that less concern them ? Me thinks it is a pittifull thing, to hear men ingeniously discoursing of the quality , laws and customs of other Nations, and of the affairs of Princes, and Common-wealths, and of the riches and commodities of Sea and land, and to be mute when they should express their acquaintance with themselves, either in confession and prayer to God , or in any humble, experimental conference with men. To trade abroad, and utterly neglect the trade of godliness at home. To keep correspondency with persons of all degrees, and to have no correspondence with themselves.

selves. To keep their *shop-books* and *accounts* with diligence, and never regard the *Book of Conscience*, nor keep *account* of that for which they must ere long be *accountable to God*. Its a pittifull thing to see men turn over voluminous *histories*, to know what hath been done from the beginning of the world, and regard no more the *history* of *their own lives*, nor once look back with penitent remorse upon their ungodly careless Conversations, nor say, *What have we done?* To see men have well-furnish'd Libraries, and read over a multitude of Books, and never read the state and records of their souls!

*Quid juvat immensos scire atq; evolvere casus,
Si facienda fugis; si fugienda facis?*

It maketh you but objects of wonder and compassion, to read *Laws* and *Records*, and understand all *Cases*, and never endeavor to understand the *Case* of your *immortal souls*! To counsell others for their *temporal estates*, and never understand your own *spiritual state*! To study the mysteries of *Nature*, and search into all the works of *God*, except *your selves*,
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and that which your happiness or misery doth depend on ! To study the nature, and causes and signs of *bodily diseases*, and their severall *remedies*, and never study the *diseases* of your *own souls* , nor the precious *remedy* which Mercy hath provided you. To cure the sicknesses of other mens bodies ; and never feel a stony, proud or sensual heart, nor use any care and industry for the cure ! To know the matters of all *Arts* and *sciences*, to be able to discourse of them all to the admiration of the hearers , is but an aggravation of thy lamentable folly , if thou be all this while a *stranger* to *thy self*, and that because thou art *mindless* of *thy souls* condition. You would but laugh at such a Learned fool that knew not how to dress himself, or eat or drink or go, and yet could talk of the profoundest speculations in Metaphysicks or other sciences. It is more necessary to *know your selves*, your sin, your duty, your hopes, your dangers , then to know how to eat, or drink, or cloath your selves. Alas, it is a pittifull *kind of knowledge*, that will not keep you out of *Hell* ; and a *foolish wisdom* that teacheth you not to *save your souls*. *Per veram scientiam itur ad disciplinam ; per disciplinam ad bonitatem ; per bonitatem*

bonitatem ad beattitudinem, saith *Hugo*. Till you know your selves, the rest of your knowledge is but a confused dream: When you know the *thing*, you know not the *end*, and *use* and *worth* of it. Self-knowledge will direct you in all your studies, and still imploy you on that which is necessary, and will do you good, when others are studying but unprofitable impertinent things; and indeed are but [*proud, knowing nothing* (when they seem to excell in knowledge) *but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, that take gain for godliness,*] 1 Tim. 6.4,5. Self-knowledge will help you in all your studies, to know, *Quo ordine, quo studio, quo fine unumquodq; scire oporteat. Quo ordine; ut illud prius, quod maturius movet ad salutem: Quo studio; ut illud ardentius, quod vehementius ad amorem: Quo fine; ut non ad inanem gloriam & ostentationem, sed ad tuam & aliorum salutem*] saith *Bernard*. You will know in what order, with what study, and to what end every thing should be known: In what order, that that may go first, that most promoteth our salvation: with what study or desire; that we

may know that most ardently, which most vehemently provoketh Love : To what end ; that it be not for vainglory and ostentation, but for your own and other mens salvation.]

And as it is our selves and our own affairs that are nearest to us, and therefore first in order to be known ; so it is our selves that we have a special charge of, and that we are most obliged to study and to know, and it is our own condition and soul-affairs that most concern us. Though Sun and Moon, and earth, be not little things in themselves ; yet the knowledge of them is a small inconsiderable matter to thee in comparison of the knowledge of thy self. The words even of Seneca are so pungent on this subject, that I shall recite some of them to shame those professed Christians that are so much short of a heathen. [*Quid ad virtutem viam sternit syllabarum enarratio, verborum diligentia, & fabularum memoria, & versuum lex & modificatio ? Quid ex his metum demit, cupiditatem frenat ?*] What furtherance to vertue is the enarration of syllables, the diligence of words, the remembring of fables, and the law and modification of Verses ? What of these taketh away fear, and bridleth concupiscence ? *Metiri me Geometer docet latifundia :*

latifundia : potius doceat quomodo metiar quantum homini satis sit : Docet quomodo nihil perdam ex finibus meis : at ego discere volo quomodo totum hilaris amittam. Scis rotunda metiri : si artifex es, metire hominis animum; dic quam magnus, dic quam pusillus sit. Scis quæ recta sit linea : quid tibi prodest si quid in vita rectum sit ignoras ?]

The Geometrian teacheth me to measure spacious grounds : let him rather teach me to measure how much is sufficient for a man : He teacheth me how I may lose nothing of my possessions : But that which I would learn is, how I may lose all with a cheerfull mind. Then canst measure rounds ; if thou be an artist, measure the mind of man ; tell me how great it is , or how little or low. Thou knowest a strait line : and what the better art thou if thou know not what is right or strait in thy own life ?] Hoc scire quid proderit, ut sollicitus sim, quum Saturnus & Mars è contrario stabunt? —————

Illa liberalium artium consecratio molestos, intempestivos, verbosos, sibi placentes facit, & ideo non discentes necessaria, quia supervacua didicerunt] [What good will it do me, that I should be solicitous to know when Saturn and Mars will stand in opposition ? ——— This diligent study of the liberal arts,

arts, doth make men troublesome, unseasonable, wordy, self-pleasing, and such as therefore learn not things necessary, because they have learned things superfluous.]

When our nearer greater works are done, then those that are more distant will be *seasonable, and usefull, and excellent* in their proper places. When men understand the state and affairs of their *souls*, and have made sure of their everlasting happiness, they may then *seasonably* and *wisely* manage Political and Oeconomical affairs, and prudently order and prosecute their *temporal* concernments: when they *first seek the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, subordinate things may be seasonably considered. But for a man to be taken up about matters of *Law, or Trade, or Pleasure*, when he mindeth not the matters of his *salvation*; and to study *languages, Arts and Sciences*, when he studieth not how to *escape damnation*, is not to be *Learned*, but to dote; nor to be *honourably* or *prudently* employed, but to walk as a *noctambule*, a man in a dream, and live besides the Reason of a man, as well as below the faith of a Christian: These seemingly wise and honourable worldlings, that labour not to know what state and relation they stand
in

n towards God, and his Judgement, do
 ive in a more pernicious distraction then
 he that is *disputing in mood and figure* while
 his house is *burning over his head*, or he
 that is *learning to fiddle or dance*, when he
 is *assaulted by an enemy*, or to be *tryed for*
his life.

Even works of *charity* seem but *absurd*
preposterous acts, in those that are not
charitable to themselves. To be carefull
 to *feed or cloath the bodies of the poor*, and
 senseless of the nakedness & misery of your
own souls, is an irrational distracted course
 of Mercy: As if a man should be diligent
 to *cure another of a boyl*, while he minds
 not the *plague or leprosie upon himself*: or
 should be busie to *pull a thorn out of ano-*
thers finger, and senseless of a *stab* thats gi-
 ven *himself in the bowels or at the heart*. To
Love your self, and *not your neighbour*, is
selfish, unsociable and uncharitable. To
Love neither your neighbour nor your self,
 is *inhumane*: To *Love your neighbour and*
not your self is *preposterous, irrational, and*
scarcely possible. But to *Love first your self*
 (next God,) and then to *Love your neigh-*
bour as your self, is *regular, orderly, Christi-*
an Charity.

10. Consider also, that the *Ignorance of*
your

your selves, doth much unfit you to be usefull unto others. If you are Magistrates, you will never be soundly faithfull against the sin of others, till you have felt how hurtfull it is to your selves. If you are Ministers, you will scarce ever be good at *heart-searching* work, till you have *searcht your own*: Nor will you know the deceitfulness of sin, and the turnings and windings of the crooked Serpent, till you have observed them in your selves: Nor will you have due compassion on the ignorant, impenitent, ungodly, unconverted, or on the tempted, weak, disconsolate souls, till you have learned rightly to be affected with sin and misery in *your selves*. If men see a Magistrate punish offenders, or hear a Minister reprove them, that is as bad or worse himself, they will but deride the *justice* of the one, and *reproofs* of the other, as the acts or words of blind partiality and hypocrisie; and accoast you with a *Medice cura te ipsum*, Physitian heal thy self: with a *Loripidem rectus derideat, Ethiopem abbas, &c.* — and a *Primus jussa subi, &c.* and a *Qui alterum incusat probri, ipsum se intueri oportet*] First sweep before your own door. Its ridiculous for the blind to reproach the pur-blind: *Qua in aliis reprehendis*

reprehendis, in teipso maxime reprehende. Re-
prehend that more in thy self, which thou
reprehendest in another. The eye of the
soul is not like the eye of the body, that
can see other things, but not it self.
There are two evils that Christ noteth in
the reproofs of such as are unacquainted
with themselves, in Math. 7. 3, 4. Hypocrisie
and Unfitness to reprove. [Why beheldest
thou the mote that is in thy brothers eye, but
considerest not the beam that is in thy own
eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother,
Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye,
and behold, a beam is in thy own eye? Thou
Hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine
own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to
cast out the mote out of thy brothers eye.]
Thy own vices do corrupt thy judgement,
and cause thee to excuse the like in others,
and to accuse the virtue that in others is
the condemner of thy vice, and to repre-
sent all as odious that is done by those
that by their piety and reproofs are become
odious to thy guilty and malicious soul.
Dost thou hate a holy heavenly life, and
art void of the love of God, and of his
servants? Hast thou a carnal, dead, uncon-
verted heart? art thou a presumptuous,
careless, worldly wretch? Hast thou these
beams.

beams in thy own eye? and art thou fit to quarrel with others that are better then thy self, about a Ceremony or a Holy day, or a circumstance of Church-Government or Worship, or a doubtfull controverted opinion: and to be pulling these motes out of thy Brotherse eye? (Yea, rather wouldst pull out his eyes, to get out the mote:) First get an illuminated mind; and a renewed sanctified heart; be acquainted with the Love of God, and of his Image; and cast out the beam of infidelity, ungodliness, worldliness, sensuality, malice and hypocrisie, from thine own eye; and then come and play the Oculist with thy brother, and help to cure him of his lesser involuntary errors and infirmities. Till then the beam of thy sensuality and impiety will make thee a verry incompetent Judge, of the mote of a different opinion in thy brother. Every word that thou speakest in condemnation of thy brother, for his opinion or infirmity, is a double condemnation of thy self for thy ungodly, fleshly life. And if thou wilt needs have judgement to begin at the house of God, for the failings of his sincere and faithfull servants, it may remember thee to thy terror what the end of them shall be that obey not the Gospel of God: And if you will condemn

condemn the righteous for their lamented weakneses, where think you the ungodly and the sinner shall appear? 1 Pet. 4. 17, 18.

II. If you begin not at your selves, you can make no progress to a just and edifying knowledge of extrinsick things. Mans self is the Alphabet or Primer of his learning. *Non pervenitur ad summa nisi per inferiora.* You cannot come to the top of the stairs, if you begin not at the bottom. *Frustra cordis oculum erigit ad videndum Deum, qui secundum idoneus est ad videndum seipsum: Prius enim est ut cognoscas invisibilia spiritus tui, quam possis esse idoneus ad cognoscendum invisibilia Dei; & si non potes te cognoscere, non presumas apprehendere ea que sunt supra te* (inquit. *Hug. de Anim.*) i.e. [In vain doth he lift up his heart to see God, that is yet unfit to see himself. For thou must first know the invisible things of thy own spirit, before thou canst be fit to know the invisible things of God. And if thou canst not know thy self, presume not to know the things that are above thy self.] You cannot see the face which it representeth, if you will not look upon the glass which representeth it. *God is not visible, but appeareth to us*

us in his creatures; and especially in our selves. And if we know not our selves, we cannot know God in our selves. [*Præcipuum & principale est speculum ad videndum Deum animus rationalis intuens seipsum* (inq. Hug.) *The principal glass for the beholding of God, is the Reasonable soul beholding it self.*

And you will make but an unhappy progress in your study of the *Works of God*, if you begin not with your selves. You can know but little of the *Works of Nature*, till you know your *own nature*: And you can know as little of the *Works of Grace*, till *self-acquaintance* help you to know the nature and danger of those *diseases* that *Grace* must cure. The unhappy error of presumptuous *students*, about their *own hearts*, misleadeth and perverteth them in the whole course of their studies; that by all, they do but profit in misapplied notions and self-deceit. Its a lamentable sight to see a man turning over *Fathers and Councils*, and diligently studying words and notions, that is himself in the gall of *bitterness and bond of iniquity*, and never knew it, nor studieth the cure. And its a pitifull thing to see such in a *Pulpit*, teaching the people to know the mysteries of salvation,

tion, that know not, nor ever laboured to know, what sins are predominant in their own hearts and lives; or Whether they stand before God in a justified or a condemned state! To hear a poor *unsanctified* man, as *boldly* treating of the mysteries of *sanctification*, as if he had felt them in himself: and a man that is *condemned already*, and stayeth but a while till the stroke of death, for final execution, to treat as calmly of judgement and damnation, as if he were out of danger; and exhorting others to escape the misery which he is in himself, and never dreameth of it! This sheweth how sad a thing it is for men to be *ignorant of themselves*. To see men run out into damnable and dangerous errors on each hand, some into the *proud self-conceitedness* of the Phanaticks, Enthusiasts and Libertines, and some into *contempt and scorn of holiness*, and every one confident even to rage in his own distractions; this doth but shew us, whither men will go, that are *unacquainted with themselves*.

This also maketh us so *troubled* with our *auditors*, that when they would learn the truth that should convert and save them, are carping and quarrelling with us, and

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hear us as the Pharisees and Herodians heard Christ, to catch him in his words, *Mark. 12. 13.* As if a dying man in a consumption, imagining that he is well, should go to the Physician to make a *jeast* of him, or seek to ruine him for telling him that he is sick. And how frowardly do they reject the wisest counsel, and cast the medicine with unthankfull indignation into the face of the Physician? And they must *tell us themselves what medicine* must be given them, what doctrine, and what administrations they must have. But *self-acquaintance* would teach them to understand that of *Augustine* [*Novit medicus quid salutiferum, quidve contrarium petat agrotus. Egroti estis, nolite ergo dictare quae vobis medicamina velit opponere.*]

Yea, they that *will not be directed or healed* by us, will blame us if *others be not healed*, and hit the Minister in the teeth with the errors and faults of his *unteachable hearers*. Though we do our best in season and out of season, and they cannot tell us what we have neglected on our part that was like to do the cure (though I confess we are too often negligent :) and though we succeed to the conversion of *many others* ; yet must we be reproached with the *disobedience* of the
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impenitent ! as if it were not grief enough to us, to have our labours frustrate, and see them obstinate in their sin and misery, but we must also be blamed or derided for our calamity !

Fecerit & postquam quicquid jubet ipsa mendendi

*Norma, nisi valeat subitoq; revixerit ager,
Murmurat inspiens vulgus, linguaq, loquaci,*

*Et loquitur de te convitia, talia jactans,
Heu mihi, quam stultum est medicorum credere nugis !*

As if they knew not the power of the disease; and what a wonder of mercy it is that any and so many are recovered.

*Non est in medico semper reveletur ut ager;
Interdum docta plus valet arte malum.*

None would die if Physicians could cure all: And none would perish if Ministers could save all. Rhetor non semper persuadet, nec medicus semper sanabat, saith the Philosopher. They cast away the medicine, and then blame the Physician: *Cradelam vel infelicem medicum intemperantem*

eger facit. An intemperate unruly patient maketh the Physition seem cruel or unsuccessfull.

12. Lastly consider but how *many*, how *great* and *necessary* things concerning your *selves* you have to *know*, and it will shew you how needfull it is to make this the first of your studies. To know what you are as men; with what faculties you are endowed, and to what use; for what end you live; in what Relation you stand to God and to your fellow creatures; what duties you owe; what sin is in your hearts; and what hath been by commission and omission in your lives; what humiliation, contrition and repentance you have for that sin; Whether you have truly entertained an offered Christ; and are renewed and sanctified by his spirit; and unreservedly devoted to God, and resolved to be entirely his: Whether you Love him above all, and your neighbours as your selves; Whether you are Justified and have forgiveness of all your sins; Whether you can bear afflictions from the hand, or for the sake of Christ, even to the forsaking of all the world for the hopes of the heavenly everlasting treasure; how you perform the daily works of your relations and callings; Whether

Whether you are ready to die, and are safe from the danger of damnation. O did you but know how it concerneth you to get all these questions well resolved, you would find more *matter* for your *studies* in *your selves*, then in many volumes. You would then perceive that the matters of your *own hearts and lives*, are not so lightly and carelessly to be past over, as they ordinarily be by drowsie sinners: To consider but *Quid, Quis, Qualis sit*; *Quid in natura, Quis in persona, Qualis in vita* (*ut Bern.*) would find you no small labour. And it would redound (saith another) *in utilitatem sui, charitatem proximi, contemptum mundi, amorem Dei*: to our own profit, charity to our neighbour, the contempt of the world, and the love of God.

If you have but many & weighty busineses to think on in the world, you are so taken up with care, that you cannot turn away your thoughts. And yet do you find no work at home, where you have such a world of things to think on, and such as of all the matters in the world, do nearest concern you?

Having shewed you so much Reason for this duty, let me now take leave to invite you all, to the serious study of your selves. It is a duty past all controversie agreed on by *heathens* as well as Christians, and urged by them in the generall, though many of the particulars to be knowne are beyond their light: It brutifyeth man to be ignorant of himself. *Man that is in honour and understandeth not* (himself especially) *is as the beasts that perish.* Psal. 49. 20. saith Boetius, [*Humana natura infra bestias redigitur, si se nosse desierit: Nam ceteris animantibus sese ignorare natura est; hominibus vitio venit*] Its worse then beastly to be ignorant of our selves, it being a vice in us, which is nature in them.

Come home you wandering self-neglecting souls; Lose not your selves in a wilderness or tumult of impertinent, vaine, distracting things; your work is neerer you; The country that you should first survey and travaile, is within you; from which you must pass to that above you: when by losing your selves in this without you, you will find your selves before you are aware, in that below you. And then

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(as Gregory speakes) he that was *stultus in culpa*, a foole in fining, will be *sapiens in pœna*, wise in suffering! you shall then have time enough to review your lives, and such constraining help to know your selves, as you cannot resist. O that you would know but a little of that now, that then you must els know in that overwhelming evidence which will everlastingly confound you! And that you would now thinke of that for a timely cure, which els must be thought of endlessly in despair. Come home then, and see what work is there. Let the eyes of fooles be in the corners of the earth! Leave it to men besides themselves, to live as without themselves, and to be still from home, and waste that time in other business, that was given them to prepare for life eternall. [*Laudabilior est animus, cui nota est infirmitas propria, quam qui ea non perspecta, mania mûdi, vias syderum, fundamenta terrarum, & fastigia calorum scrutatur*] inquit August. [*The soule is more laudable that knowes its own infirmity, then he that without discerning this doth search after the compass of the world, the courses of the starres, the foundations of the earth, and the heights of the heavens.*] Dost thou delight in the mysteryes of nature? consider well

the mysteries of thy own. *Mirantur aliqui altitudines montium, ingentes fluctus maris, altissimos lapsus fluminum, & Oceani ambitum, & gyros syderum, & relinquunt seipsos, nec mirantur*. saith Augustine [some men admire the heights of mountaines, the huge waves of the sea, the great falls of the rivers, the compass of the Ocean and the circuit of the stars, and they passe by them themselves without admiration] The compendium of all that thou studyest without thee, is near thee, even within thee, thy self being the epitome of the world. If either necessary or duty, nature or grace, reason or faith, internall inducements, external repulses, or eternall attractives and motives, might determine of the subject of your studies and contemplations, you would call home your lost distracted thoughts, and employ them more on yourselves and God.

But before I urge this duty further, I must prevent the misapplication of some troubled soules; I must confess it is a grievous thing for a guilty soul to judge it self, and see its own deformity and danger: And I observe many troubled humbled soules,

soules, especially where melancholy much prevails, are exceeding prone to abuse this duty, by *excess* and by *misdoing it*: Though *wandering minds* must be *called home*, we must not run into the other extreame, and shut up our selves, and wholly dwell on the motions of our owne distempered hearts: Though *stragling thoughts* must be *turned inward*, and our hearts must be *watched*, and not neglected; yet must we not be *always poring on our selves*, and neglect the rest of our intellectual converse: To look too long on the running of a stream will make our eyes misjudge of what we after look on, as if all things had the same kind of motion: To look too long on the turning of a wheele, will make us vertiginous, as if all turnd round. And to pore too long on the disordered motions, the confused thoughts, the wants, the passions of our diseased minds, will but molest us, and cast us into greater disquiet and confusion. The words of *Anselme* notably express the streights that Christians are here put to [*O nimis gravis angustia, si me inspicio, non tolero meipsum: si non inspicio, nescio meipsum: si me considero, terret me facies mea: si me non considero, fallit me damnatio mea; si me video, horror est*

est intolerabilis: si non video, mors est inevitabilis.] [O grievous streight! If I look into my self, I cannot endure my self: if I look not into my self I cannot know my self. If I consider my self, my own face affrighteth me: if I consider not my self, my damnation deceiveth me: If I see my self, the horror is intolerable: if I see not my self, death is unavoidable.]

In this streight we must be carefull to avoid both extreames; and nether neglect the study of our selves, nor yet exceed in poring on our selves. To be carelessly ignorant of our selves, is to undoe our selves for ever: To be too much about our selves, is to disquiet rather then to edyfie our selves; and to turne a great and necessary duty into a great unnecessary trouble.

Consider, 1. that we have many other matters of great importance to study and know when we know our selves. We must chiefly study God himself; and all the Books of Scripture, Nature and Governing providence which make him known. What abundance of great and excellent Truths, have we in all these to study. What time, what industrie is necessary to understand them? And should we lay out all this time about our own hearts and actions, which is but one part of our study. What sinful omissions

ons should we be guilty of in the neglecting of all these! It is indeed but the *burying* of our talent of understanding, to *confine* it to so narrow a compass as *ourselves*, and to omit the study of God, and his word and workes, which are all with delight and diligence to be studyed.

We have also *Christ and his Gospell mysteries and benefits* to study. We have the *churches ease*, its *dangers*, *sufferings*, and *deliverances* to study: We have the state of *our neighbours and brethren* to consider of: The *mercies*, and *dangers*, and *sufferings* both of their *soules* and *bodies*: we have our *enemies* to thinke of with due compassion: and our duty to all these.

2. And as it is *negligence* and *omission* to be *all at home*, and pass by so great a part of duty; so is it a *double frustration* of *our labour*, and will *make* even *this study of ourselves* to be in vaine, 1. We cannot come by all our study to the true *knowledge of our selves*, unless we also study *other things* besides *ourselves*. For we are *Related to God*, as his *creatures*, as his *Own*, as his *subjects* and as his *dependant children*, as his *Redeemed*, and his *sanctified ones*, (or such as *should be such*) And if we know not God as *Creator*, *Redeemer* and

and *Sanctifier*; as our *Owner*, *Ruler* and *Benefactor*; and know not what his *creation*, *Redemption*, *sanctification*, his *Title Government* and *Benefits* meane, it is not possible that we should *know our selves*. *Mutual Relations* must be known together, or neither can be known.

2. And if we could *know our selves*, and know *no more*, it were but to know *Nothing*, and lose that knowledge. For this is but the *enterance* into wisdom, and the *meanes and way* to higher knowledge. This learning of our *Alphabet* or *Primer* is *lost*, if we learn *no further*; you are therefore to study and know *your selves* that you may advance to the knowledge of *Christ* and *his grace*, and be acquainted with the *Remedie* of all that you find amiss at *home*: and that by *Christ* you may be brought unto the *Father*, and *know God* as your *happiness* and *rest*; you are not your own ultimate ends, and therefore must goe further in your studies then yourselves.

3. We shall never attaine to *Rectitude* or *solid comfort* and *content*, unless our studies goe further then *ourselves*. For we are not the *Rule* to *our selves*, but *crooked lines*! and cannot know what is *right* and *wrong*, if we study not the *Rule* as well as *ourselves*

our selves. And alas, we are diseased, miserable sinners. And to be *alwayes* looking on so sad a spectacle, can bring no *peace* or *comfort* to the mind. To be *still* looking on the *fore*, and hearing only the cry of conscience, will be but a foretaste of Hell. When we would be *humbled* and have matter of *lamentation*, we must look *homeward*, where the *troubling* thorns and nettles of corruption grow. But if we would be *comforted* and *lift up*, we must look *higher*, to *Christ* and to his *promises*, and to *everlasting life*: *our* garden beareth no flowers or fruits that are so cordial.

This much I have spoke by way of *Caution*, 1. That you may not think I am driving you into the *extream* of *solitude*, and *confining* or *imprisoning* you at home. 2. Because some scarce know how to avoid a *fault*, without running into *another* on the other side the way: nor how to understand the *right use* of a doctrine, but are turning it into an *abuse*, and building *sin* upon the foundation of righteousness.

Two sorts of persons have great need of this caution, that *they dwell not too much on themselves*. One is *poor Melancholy* people that can think of almost nothing else: Their distemper disposeth them to be *alwayes*

wayes poring on themselves, and fixing their thoughts on their sin and misery, and searching into all their own miscarriages, and making them worse then indeed they are: You cannot call off their thoughts from continual self-condemning, and musing on their own misdeings and unhappiness. They have a God, a Christ, a heaven, a treasure of precious promises to meditate on; and they cannot hold their thoughts to these, (unless as they aggravate their sin and sorrows,) but live as if they had nothing to think on but themselves; and were made to be their own tormentors: day and night even when they should labour, and when they should sleep, they are busie in a fruitless vexation of themselves. These poor afflicted souls have need to be called from the excessive study of themselves.

Another sort is, those Christians that are wholly taken up in enquiring whether they have saving grace or not; while they neglect that exercise of their grace, in doing all the good they can to others, and following on the way of faithfull duty, which might do more to their assurance, then solitary tryals.

The former sort by overdoing in this one
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part of their work, disable themselves to all the rest. They tire and distract their minds, and raise such fears as hinder their understandings, and cast their thoughts into such confusion, that they quite lose the command of them, and cannot gather them up for any holy work: Yea while they study nothing but *themselves*, they lose even the knowledge of *themselves*: They gaze so long upon their *faults* and *wants*, till they can see *nothing else*; and know no apprehensions but *dark* and *sad*; and wilfully unlearn the language of thanksgiving and praise; and the burden of all their thoughts and speeches, is, *Miserable* and *Undone*: as if there were for them *no mercy, no help, no hope*, but they were *utterly forsaken* and *cast off by God*.

The other sort, do so exceed in the measure of that *self-love*, which in it self is good, that they neglect the study of the *Love of God*; And are still thinking what they are and *have been*; when they should consider what they *must* be. They spend so much time in trying their *foundation*, that they can make but little progress in the building. They are lik *Musicians* that will spend all the day in setting *Instruments* in tune; Or like a *Mower* that spends most of

of his time in *whetting*. They are all day *preparing their tools* while they should be *working* ! And putting on their *armour*, and preparing their *weapons*, when they should be *fighting* : And *enquiring which is the way*, while they should be *travelling*. They leave undone too much of their work *without doors* while they confine themselves to that *within* : And that *within* goes on the worse, because they neglect that *without doors*, which should further it. When they should instruct the ignorant, exhort the obstinate, confirm the weak, or comfort the afflicted, they are complaining of their *own* ignorance, obstinacy, weakness, or affliction ; and help not others because they feel such need of help themselves : As if they were like beggars, that had *nothing to give*, but must live by *asking and receiving* : They understand not that its one of the *mysteries* of godliness, that *teaching others* doth *inform themselves*, and the Light which they bring in for others, will serve themselves to work by ; and that *reproving others* doth *correct themselves* : and *exhorting others* doth *prevail with themselves* ; and *persuading* the obstinate wills of others, doth tend to *bend and resolve their own* ; & that *comforting others* doth tend to *revive*
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and raise themselves: Their own spirits may be a little revived, by the very smell of the Cordials they prepare for others. In this case, Giving is both Begging and Receiving. Doing good is not the least effectual kind of prayer: And that we may be so imployed, is not the smallest mercy. Many a one hath thus grown rich by giving: Many a one hath convinced himself by confuting his own objections from another: And many a one hath raised and comforted himself, by offering comfort to others that have the same infirmities; and have banished their own excessive doubts and fears, by frequent compassionate answering the same in others whose sincerity they have less suspected than their own.

None thrive more than they that grow in the Sun shine of *Gods blessing*: And *God bleisseth* those most that are most faithfull in his work: And the *work of Love*, is the *work of God*. To do good, is to be *most like him*: And they that are *most like him*, do best please him: In *subordination to Christ*, in whom we are accepted, we must by his spirit be made thus acceptable in our selves: We must be amiable if we will be loved. And those that God loveth best, and is most pleased with, are like to receive most plentifully from his Love. It is necessary
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therefore to our own safety, and holiness, and consolation, that we look much abroad at the necessities of others, and study our brethren, and the Church of God, as well as our selves: That we look not every man in his own things, but every man also on the things of others, Phil. 2. 4.

There may be somewhat of inordinate selfishness, even about our souls: And sinful selfishness is alwayes a losing course. As he that will be a self-saver in point of estate, or honour, or life, taketh the ready way to lose them (Mat. 16. 15.) so he that for the saving of his soul, will confine all his care and charity to his own soul, taketh not the way indeed to save it. We keep not our selves; We quicken not; We comfort not; We save not our selves; but only as agents under Christ, manuring the land, and sowing the seed, to which he alone can give the blessing: It is not therefore our inordinate self-studying that will do it: With all our care, without his blessing, we cannot add one cubit to the stature of our graces: Therefore it must needs be our safest course, to be as carefull and faithfull as we can in duty, and lay out most of our study to please him; and then if we come not to assurance of his love, or discern not his image and grace upon us, yet we must

must trust him with our souls, and leave
 the rest to his Care and Goodness, that hath
 undertaken that none shall be losers by
 him, nor be ashamed or frustrate of their
 hopes, that wait upon him, and obey him:
 Let us *commit the keeping of our souls to*
him in well doing, as unto a faithfull Creator,
 1 Pet. 4. 19. *as the eyes of servants look to*
the hand of their Masters——so our eyes (in
 a way of duty) must wait upon the Lord our
 God, till he have mercy upon us, Psal. 123. 1, 2.
 And though we grow weary of crying, and
 our throat be dried, and our eyes fail while
 we wait for God, (Psal. 69. 3.) yet our
 hope is only in him, and therefore we must
 continue to wait upon him, Psal. 39. 7. *And*
they that wait for him shall not be ashamed,
 Isa. 49. 23.

It is not the pretended necessity of one
 work, that will excuse him that hath
 many as necessary to do: Especially when
 they are conjunct in nature and necessity,
 and must go together, to attain their end.
 Concerning God, as we may well say that
 we must Love and serve him only, and none
 but him, because we must Love nothing
 but for his sake, and as a means to him the
 End of all: and so while it is God in all
 things that we Love, we are more pro-

perly said to *Love God* then the *Creature* by that act, because he is the Ultimate first intnded *end*, and principal *object* of that *Love*; And as the *means*, as a *means*, hath its essence in its *relation to the End*; so the *Love of the means, as such*, is accordingly specified: And so we may say of our *study* and *Knowledge of God*, that *nothing but God* is to be studied or known: because it is *God in the creature* that must be studied: It is a defective Similitude (as all are) to say, [*As it is the face that we behold the glass for:*] For *God* is *more* in the *creature* then the *face* in the *glass*. But though all the *means* be *united* in the *End*, yet are they *various* among *themselves*. And therefore though we must study, know and Love *nothing but God*; yet must we study, know and Love many things *besides our selves*: The means that are many, must all be thought on. More *strings* must be touched then *one* (how near soever) if we will have any Musick. More *Letters* must be learned than [*I,*] or we shall never learn to read.

All men will confess that to confine our *charity* to *our selves*, and to do good to no others, is unlike a Christian: To deny to feed and clothe our Brother in his need,

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is to deny it unto Christ: And it will be no excuse, if we were able, to say, *I laid it out upon my self*. And the objects of our *charity* must be the objects of our thoughts and care: And it will not suffice for our excuse, to say, [*I was taken up at home; I had a miserable soul of my own to think on.*]

And yet if these *self-studying* souls, that confine almost all their thoughts unto *themselves*, would but seek after *God in themselves*, and see his *grace*, and *benefits*, it were the better: But poor souls, in the darkness of temptation, they overlook their *God*; and most of their study of *themselves*, is to see *Satan* and *his workings in themselves*: To find as much of *his image* as they can, in the *deformities* or *infirmities* of their souls; but the *image of God* they overlook, and hardly will acknowledge. And so, as *noble objects* raise the soul, and *amiable objects* kindle love, and *comfortable objects* fill it with *delight*; and *God*, who is *all in One perfection*, doth *elevate* and *perfect* it, and make it *happy*; so *inferiour objects* do *depress* it; and *ugly loathsome objects* fill it with *distaste* and *loathing*; and *sad and mournfull objects* turn it into *grief*; And therefore to be *still* looking on our *miseries*, and *deformities*, must needs turn

calamity and wo into the *temperament* and *complexion* of the soul.

This much I thought needfull to be spoken here to prevent misunderstanding and misapplication : that while I am pressing you to *study* and *know your selves*, I may not encourage any in extreams, nor tempt them to make an ill use of so great and necessary a doctrine : And indeed the observation of the sad calamity of many poor drooping afflicted souls, that are still poring excessively on their own hearts, commanded me not to overpass this caution. And yet when I have done it, I am afraid lest those in the *contrary extream*, will take *encouragement* to *neglect themselves*, by my reprehensions of those that are so unlike them.

And therefore I must add, to save them from deceit; 1. That it is but a *very few* that are faulty in *overstudying themselves*, in comparison of the many thousands that err on the other hand in the *careless neglecting of themselves*. 2. And that it is *symptomatically* and *effectively* far more *dangerous*, to *study your selves too little*, then *too much*. Though it be a fault *here* to *exceed*; yet it is for the most part a sign of an honest heart to be *much at home*,
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and a sign of an Hypocrite to be *little at home and much abroad*. Sincerity maketh men *censurers of themselves*. For it maketh them more *impartial*, and *willing* to know the truth of their condition: It cureth them of that folly that before made them think that presumption shall deliver them, and that they shall be *justified* by believing *promises of their own*, though *contrary* to the word of God; yea, by *believing the promises of the Devil*, and calling this a *Faith in Christ*: They are *awakened* from that *sleep* in which they *dreamed* that *winking* would save them from the *stroke of Justice*, and that a strong *conceit* that they shall not be damned, will deliver them from damnation; and that they are *safe from Hell* if they can but believe that there is *no Hell*, or can but *forget* it, or escape the *fears* of it. These are the pernicious Conclusions of the *ungodly*, discernable in their lives, and intimated in their presumptuous reasonings, though too gross to be *openly* and *expressly* owned: And therefore they are undiposed to any impartial acquaintance with themselves.

But grace recovereth men from this distraction; and makes them know that the *Judgement of God* will not follow the con-

seits of men ; and that the knowledge of their disease is necessary to their cure ; and the knowledge of their danger is necessary to the prevention ; and that its the greatest madness to go on to Hell, for fear of knowing that we are in the way ; and to refuse to know it, for fear of being troubled at the news.

And an upright soul is so far fallen out with *sin*, that he taketh it seriously for his enemy ; and therefore is willing to discover it in order to its destruction ; and willing to search after it in order to a discovery.

And he hath in him some measure of the heavenly illumination, which maketh him a child of light, and disposeth him to love the light, and therefore cometh to it that his deeds may be made manifest, *Joh. 3. 21.* Hypocrites are quick-sighted in discovering infirmities of others ; but at home they shut the windows, and draw the curtains, that they may not be disturbed or frightened in their sin ; Thieves and sleepers choose not light : Darknes suits the works of darkness. It is a good sign when a man dare see his own face in the glass of Gods word ; and when he dare hear his conscience speak. I have ever observed it in the most sincere-hearted Christians, that their eye is
more

more upon their *own hearts and lives*, than upon *others* : and I have still observed the most *unsound professors* to be least censorious and regardfull of *themselves*, and hardly drawn to converse at *home*, and to pass an impartial judgement on themselves.

HENCE therefore you may be informed of the reason of many other differences between sincere Believers and the Ungodly. As 1. Why it is that the *sincere* are so ready to *discourse* about matters of the *heart* ; and that they so much *relish* such *discourse* ; and that they have so much to *say* when you come to such a *subject*. It is because they *know themselves* in some good measure. They have *studied*, and are *acquainted* with the *Heart* ; And therefore can *talk* the more sensibly of what is contained in a *book* which they have so often *read*, and are so conversant in. Talk with them about the matters of the *world*, and perhaps you may find them more simple and ignorant than many of their neighbours ; But when you talk about the *Corruptions* of the *heart*, and the *secret workings* of them ; the *matter*, and *order*, and *government* of the *thoughts*,

thoughts, and affections, and passions; the wants and weaknesses of believers; the nature and workings of inward temptations; the wayes of grace, and of the exercise of each grace; the motions and operations of the spirit upon the heart; the breathings of Love and desire after God; the addresses of the soul to Christ by faith, and dependance on him, and receivings from him; about these secret matters of the Heart, he is usually more able in discourse, then many learned men that are unsanctified.

And hence it is that upright self-observing souls are so *full in prayer*, and able to pour out their *hearts so enlargedly* before the Lord, in confessing their sins, and petitioning for grace, and opening their necessities, and thanking God for spiritual mercies! Some that are themselves acquainted with *themselves*, and the workings of grace, despise all this, and say, *It is but an ability to speak of the things which they are most used to.* I doubt not but meer *acquired abilities* and *custom* may advance some *hypocrites*, to pray in the language of experienced Christians. And I doubt not but *natural impediments*, and want of *use*, and of right education, may cause many to want
convenient

convenient expressions, that have true desires. But the question is, from whence it comes to pass, that so great a number of those that are most carefull and diligent for their souls, are so full in holy conference and prayer, when very few others that excell them in learning and natural parts, have any such ability? And doubtless the chief reason is, that the care and study of these Christians, hath been most about their spiritual estate; And that which they set their hearts upon, they use their tongues upon: Generally it cannot be imagined, why they should use themselves to those studies and exercises which procure those abilities, but that they highly esteem, and most seriously regard the matters that concern their salvation, which are the subject. I doubt not but God bestoweth his gifts upon men in the use of means; and that it is partly use that maketh men able and ready in these services of God: But what reason can be given, why one part of men use themselves to such employments, and another part are unable through disuse, but that some do set their hearts upon it, and make it their business to know themselves, their sins and wants and seek relief, when by the others all this is neglected.

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Some hypocrites may be moved by lower ends, both in this and in other duties of Religion; but that's no rule for our judging of the intentions of the *generality*, or of *any* that are *sincere*. As a man that hath lived in the East or West Indies, is able to discourse of the places and people which he hath seen, and perhaps another by a Map or historie may say somewhat of the same subject, though less distinctly and sensibly; but others can say nothing of it: so a man of holy experience in the mysteries of sanctification, that is much conversant at home, and acquainted with his own heart, is able (if other helps concur) to speak what he *feels*, to God and man; and from his *particular observation and experience*, to frame his *prayers and spiritual conference*; and an hypocrite from Reading and common observation, may do something affectedly that's like it: but careless self-neglecting worldlings are usually dumb about such matters, and hear you as they do men of another Countrey, that talk in a language which they do not understand, or at least cannot make them any answer in.

But if any of you will *needs* think more basely and maliciously, of the *cause* of holy

ly

ly' *prayer* and *conference* in believers, let us leave them for the present (to the Justification of him that gave them the spirit of supplication which you reproach,) and let us only enquire what is the Reason that men that can discourse as handsomely as others, about *worldly matters*, have *nothing to say* (beyond a few cold affected words, which they have learnt by rote) either to God or man, about the matters of the soul, the methods of the spirit, the workings of a truly penitent heart, or the elevations of faith, and the pantings of desire after God. Why are you *dumb* when you should speak this language, and *frequently* and *delightfully* speak it? Is it because your *Reason* is *lower* than those mens that *do speak* it, whom you despise? and that you are *naturally* near kin to *ideots*? No; you are *wise enough* to *do evil*: You can talk of your *trades*, your *honours* or *employments*, your *acquaintance* and *correspondencies* all the day long; You are *more wordy* about these *little things*, than the Preachers themselves that you count most tedious are about the *greatest*. You are *much longer* in discoursing of your *delusory toys*, than the *Lovers of God*, whose souls long after him, are in *those Prayers*, which
trouble

trouble you with their length : Many a time have I been forced to hear your dreaming incoherent dotage : how *copious* you are in words that signifie no greater matters then *flesh pleasing*, or fancifull *honours* and *accomodations* ; I had almost said, then *chaff*, or *straw* or *dirt*. One may hear you from morning to night, from day to day , discoursing in variety of company, on various subjects , with freedom and plausible ingenuity ; And when all is set together, it is but a *hodge podge of earth and flesh and windy vanity*, a frothy puddle. As the ridiculous Orator , *Magno Conatu & biatu nihil dicitis* : You *strein* and *gape* an hour or a day together to say nothing : set all the words of a day together, and peruse them at night, and see what they are worth : There's little higher then visible materials , (that I say not , then the *dunghil* or your *shadows*,) then *meat* and *drink*, and *play* and *complement* then *houses*, or *lands* , or *domineering affections* or *actions*, in many hours or days discourse. I think of you sometime, when I see how ingeniously and busily *children* do make up their *babies* of *clouts*, and how *seriously* they *talk* about them, and how every pin and clout is matter of *employment* and *discourse* ,

course, and how *highly* they *value* them, and how many *dayes* they can *unweariedly* spend about them. Pardon my comparison: If you *repent not* of your *discourses* and *employments more then they*, and do not one day call your selves far *worse fools* then *them*, then let me be stigmatized with the most contumelious brand of folly.

It is not then your want of *Natural faculties* and *parts* that makes you mute in the matters of God and your salvation, when men of *meaner naturals* then you do speak of those things with the greatest freedom and delight.

And sure it is not for want of an *ingenious education*: As you would take it ill to be thought *below* them in *natural endowments*, so *much more* in those *acquisitions* and *furniture* of the mind, which comes by *breeding* and due culture of your *Naturals*. You would disdain in these to be compared with many poor rusticks and mechanicks, that are *almost* as fluent in speaking of the *great things of immortality*, as you are in talking of your *transient occurrences*, your *sublunary felicities*, and the *provisions* of your *Appetites* and your *Skins*. What then can be the cause of this *dumb disease*, but that you are *unacquainted with your selves*?

selves? and as you have not a *New-birth*, and a *Divine Nature*, and the *Spirit of Christ*, to be either the *spring* and *principle* or the *Matter* of your discourse; so you have not the due *knowledge* of your *sin* and *misery*, which should teach you the language of *Serious Penitents*, before you have the language of *justified Believers*.

If you say again, *It is because we have not been used to this kind of speech*. I answer, And whence is it that you have not been used to it? If you had known the *Greatness* and *Goodness* of the Lord, as sensibly as *they*, would not you have used to *Pray* to him and *Speak* of him as well as *they*? If you had known and considered your *sin*, and *wants*, and *miseries*, or *dangers*, as well as *they*, would you not have been used to beg *mercy*, *pardon* and *relief*, and to complain of your distress as much as *they*? If you did as highly value the matters of *Eternal consequence* as *they* do, and laid them to heart as seriously as *they*, would not your *minds* and *hearts* have appeared in your *speeches*, and made you use your *selves* to *prayer* and *holy conference* as well as *others*?

If you say, that *many have that within them which they are not able to express, or*
which

which they think not meet to open unto other,
I answer.

1. As to *Ability*, its true of those that have the *Impediments* of some *Natural disability*, or *excessive bashfulness*, *Melancholy* or the like disease; and of those that are so lately converted, that they have not had time to learne and use themselves to a holy language: But what's this to them that are of as good naturall parts and free elocution as other men, and suppose themselves to have bin true Christians long?

2. And as to the point of *Prudence* which is pleaded for this silence, it is so much against *Nature*, and so much against the word of God, that there is no roome at all for this pretence, unless it be for inferiours or such as want an opportunity to speak to their *superiours*, or to *strangers*; or unless it be only for some particular omissions when the thing would be *unseasonable*.

Nature hath made the *tongue* the index of the *mind*: especially to expresse the matters of most urgency and concernment. Do you keep silent ordinarily the matters which you *highliest esteem*? which you *oftenest think of*? which you take your *life and happiness* to consist in? and which you are deep-

lyest affected with, and preferre before all other matters of the world? What a shamefull pretence is it, for those that are dumb to Prayer and holy conference, for want of any due sense of their condition, or Love to God, which should open their lips, to take on them it is for want of tongues or because their Prudence directeth them to silence? When they hold not their tongues about those matters, which they must confess are ten thousand fold less regardable; they can discourse unwearyedly about their wealth, their sport, their friend, their honour, because they Love them; And if a man should here tell them, that the Heart is not to be opened or exercised by the tongue, they would thinke he knew not the naturall use of Heart or Tongue: And yet while they pretend to love God above all, they have neither skill nor will to make expression of it; you strike them dumb when you turne the streame of conference that way; and you may almost as well bid them speak in a strange language, as Pray to God from the sense of their necessities, and yet they say, their Hearts are good.

Let the word of God be judge whether a Holy experienced Heart should hide itself and not appear in Prayer and holy conference

conference by the tongue. 1 Thess. 5. 17. Pray continually: Luk. 18. 1. Christ spake a parable to this end, that men ought all-ways to pray and not waxe faint. Phil. 4. 6. Be carefull for nothing: but in every thing by Prayer, and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

And How they must Pray, you may gather from 2 Chron. 6. 29. In case of dearth, Pestilence, blasting, mildew, locusts, caterpillers, enemies, sicknesses or sores, [Then what prayer or supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all the people, when every one shall know his own sore, and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house, then heare thou from Heaven, &c.] I am not speaking of the Prescribed Prayers of the Church, nor denying the lawfullness of such in private. But if you have no words but what you say by rote, and pray not from the knowledge of your own particular sore and griefe, it is because you are too much unacquainted with yourselves, and strangers to those Hearts where the greatest of your sores and griefes are lodged.

And whether Good Hearts should be opened in holy Conference, (as well as Prayer) you may easily determine from the command of God: 1 Pet. 4. 10. 11. [As every
N 2 man

man hath received the gift, so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God] If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God. Eph 4. 29. [Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers] Heb. 3. 13. [exhort one another daily while it is called To day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfullnes of sin.] Psal. 37. 30, 31. [The mouth of the Righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment: The Law of his God is in his heart &c] Psal. 71. 8. Let my mouth be filled with thy Praise and with thy honour all the day. Pro. 10. 11. The mouth of a Righteous man is a Well of life] 21. The lips of the Righteous feed many] And Christ himself decideth it expressly, Math. 12. 34. 35. [Out of the abundance of the Heart the mouth speaketh: A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things;

For a man that hath no Heart to Prayer or Holy conference, but loathes them and is weary of them, and had rather talk of fleshly pleasures, to pretend that yet his Heart is Good, and that God will excuse him for not expressing it, and that it is his Prudence, and his freedom from Hypocrisie, that maketh

keeth his *tongue* to be so much *unacquainted* with the *goodness* of his *Heart*, this is but to play the *Hypocrite* to prove that he is no *Hypocrite*: and to cover his *Ignorance* in the *matters* of his *Salvation*, with the *expression* of his *Ignorance* of the very *nature* and *use* of *Heart* and *Tongue*, and to cast by the *Lawes* of *God*, and his *owne* *duty*, and cover this *impiety* with the name of *Prudence*. If *Heart* and *Tongue* be not used for *God*, what do you either with a *Heart* or *Tongue*?

The case is plaine, to men that can see that it is your *strangeness* to your *selves*, that is the *cause* that you have *little* to say against *yourselves*, when you should confess your *sins* to *God*; and so *little* to say for your *selves*, when you should beg his *grace*; and so *little* to say of your *selves*, when you should open your *hearts* to those that can advise you: But that you see not that this is the *Cause* of your *Dumbness*, who see so little of your *owne* *corruptions*, is no wonder while you are so *strange* at home. Had you but so much *knowledge* of *yourselves* as to see that it is the *strangeness* to your *selves* that maketh you so *prayerless* and *mute*; and so much *sense* as to *complaine* of your *darkness*, and be willing to come into the *light*, it were a signe that *light* is com-

ing in to you, and that you are in a hopefull way of cure. But when you neither *know yourselves*, nor *know that you do not know yourselves*, your *Ignorance* and *Pride* are like to cherish your *Presumption* and *impiety*, till the *Light of grace*, or the *fire of Hell* have taught you better to know your selves.

2. And here you may understand the reason why people fearing God are so apt to *accuse* and *condemn themselves*, to be *too much* cast downe; and why they that have cause of greatest joy, do sometimes walk more heavily then others. It is because they *know more* of their *sinfulness*, and take more *notice* of their *inward corruptions* and *outward failings*, then presumptuous sinners do of theirs. Because they know their *faults* and *wants*, they are *cast down*; But when they come *farther* to see their *interest in Christ and grace*, they will be *raised up* againe. Before they are converted, they usually *presume*, as being ignorant of their *sin* and *misery*: In the *infancy* of *grace* they *know these*, but yet languish for want of more knowledge of *Christ and mercy*. But he that knoweth fully both *himself* and *Christ*, both *misery* and *mercy*, is *humbled* and *comforted*, *Cast downe* and *exalted*. As a man that *never saw the sea*, is not afraid of it;

it; and he that *seeth* it but a *farre* off, and thinks he shall never come neere it, is *not much* afraid of it: he that is *drowned* in it, is *worse* then afraid: and he that is *tossed* by the waves, and doubteth of ever coming safe to harbour, is *the* *fearfull* person: he that is *tossed* but hath good *hopes* of a *safe* arrivall, hath *feares* that are *abated* or overcome with hope: but he that is *safe-landed* is *past* his *feares*. The first is like him that *never* *saw* the misery of the ungodly: the Second is like him that *seeth* it *in generall*, but thinks it doth not belong to him: the third is like the damned that are *past* *remedie*: the fourth is like the *humbled* *doubting* *Christian*, that *seeth* the *danger*, but doth too much question or forget the *helpes*; the fifth is like the *Christian* of a *stronger* *faith*, that sees the *danger*, but withall *seeth* his *help* and *safety*: the sixth is like the *glorified* *saints*, that are *past* the *danger*.

Though the *doubting* *Christian* know not his *sincerity*, and therefore knoweth not *himself* so well as the *strong* *believer* doth, yet in that he knoweth his *sinfullness* and *unworthyness*, he knoweth *himself* better then the *presumptuous* world.

These two *Remarks*, with the foregoing *Caution*, having interposed (some what out of place) I now returne to prosecute

my *Exhortation*, that no matters may seem so sweet, so honourable, so great, or necessary, as to pass with you for excuses for the neglecting of the most diligent and impartial study of yourselves.

All persons to whom I can address this *Exhortation*, are either Godly or ungodly; in the state of *sin*, or in the state of *Grace*. And both of them have need to *study themselves*.

I. And to begin with the unrenewed carnall sort, it is they that have the greatest need, to be better acquainted with themselves. O that I knew how to make them sensible of it; If any thing will doe it, me thinkes it should be done by acquainting them how much their endless state is concerned in it. In order hereunto let me yet adde to all that is said already, these few considerations;

1. *If you know not yourselves, you know not whether you are the children of God, or not: nor whether you must be for ever in Heaven or Hell; no nor whether you may not within this houre behold the angry face of God, which will frowne you into damnation. And is this a matter for a man of Reason to be quietly and contentedly*
ignorant

ignorant of ? It is a business of such unspeakable concernment, to know whether you must be *everlastingly in Heaven or Hell*, that no man can spare his cost or paines about it, without betraying and disgracing his understanding: you are *sure* you shall be *here* but a little while : Those *Bodies* you all know, will hold your *souls* but a little longer : As you know that you that are now together here attending, must presently quit *this roome* and be gone; so you know that when you have staid a little longer, you must quit *this world*, and be gone into another. And I think there is not the *proudest* of you but would be *taken downe*, nor the most *sluggish* or dead-hearted but would be *awakened*, if you *knew* that you must goe to *endless misery*, and that your dying houre would be your enterance into Hell. And if you *know not your selves*, you know not *but it may be so*. And to *know nothing to the contrary*, would be terrible to you if you well considered it, especially when you have so much cause to *fear* it. O Sirs, for a man to sit here sencelessly in these seats, that *knows not* but he may burne in Hell for ever, and knowes not because he is *blind* and *careless*; how unsuitable is it to the principle of *selflove* and
self

self preservation? and how much unbeseeming the *Rational Nature*, to have no *sense* or *care*, when you looke before you, unto the unquenchable fire and the utter darkness where, as the Heathen Poet speakes,

*Nec mortis pœnas mors altera finiet hujus;
Hœraque erit tantis ultima nulla malis.*

If any of you thinke that all these matters are to be put to the adventure, and cannot now be known, you are dangerously mistaken. As you may certainly know by *Scripture* and the *Light of Nature*, that there is a future Life of joy to the Godly, and of misery to the wicked, so may you know by a *faithfull tryall of yourselves*, to which of these at present you belong, and whether you are under the *promise* or the *threatening*; know yourselves, and you may know whether you are *justified* or *Condemned already*, and whether you are the *Heires of Heaven or Hell*. Surely he that comforteth his servants with the *Promise of Glory* to all that *Believe* and are *new creatures*, and *sanctified by his spirit*, did suppose that we may know whether we *Believe* and are *renewed* and *sanctified* or not: Or els What comfort can it be to us? If blinded Infidels, have no meanes to quiet them-

themselves but their *unbelieve*, and a conceit that there is no such Life of misery, they have the most pittifull Opiate to ease them in the world: and may as well think to become *immortall*, by a confident conceit that they *shall never die*. If they befoole themselves with the ordinary Questions [*where is Hell: and what kind of fire is it? &c*] I answer them with Augustine [*Melius est dubitare de occultis, quam litigare de incertis: Illum quippe divitem in ardore pœnarum, & illum pauperem in refrigerio gaudiorum esse intelligendos non dubito: sed quomodo intelligenda illa flamma in inferno, ille sinus Abraha, illa divitis lingua, ille digitus pauperis, illa sitis tormenti, illa stilla refrigerii, vix fortasse à mansuetè quarentibus, contentiose autem sectantibus nunquam invenitur*] that is, [*It is better to be in doubt about things that are hidden from us, then to quarrell about things that are uncertaine to us. I am past doubt that we must understand that that Rich man was in the heat of Paine, and the Poore man in a refreshing place of Joyes: But how to understand that flame in Hell, that bosome of Abraham, that tongue of the Rich man, that finger of the poore man, that thirst of torment, that drop for cooling or refreshment, perhaps will hardly*
be

be found by the most humble enquirers, but never by contentious strivers.

So that I may conclude that the greatness and dreadfulness of the case, should make every person that hath an eye to see, an eare to heare, and a Heart to understand, to Read and enquire and consider, and never rest till they know themselves, and understand *where it is* that they are going to take up their abode to everlasting.

2. Consider, that *All men must shortly know themselves.* Presumption will be but of short continuance. Be never so confident of being saved without Holynes, you will speedily be undeceived. If the *Spirits illumination* do not convince and undeceive you, *Death* will undoubtedly do it at the furthest. Thousands and Millions know their sin and misery *now* when it is too late, that would not know it when the remedy was at hand; sinners, your soules are now in *darkness*: your *Bodies* are your *dungeon*: But when *Death* brings you out into the open *Light*, you will see what *we* could never make you see. O how glad would a faithfull minister of Christ be, if by any information he could now give you halfe the *Light* that you *shall then have*, and *now* make you know at the *Heart* with the feeling of *Repentance*, that
which

which you must else quickly know, even at the Heart with the *feeling of despaire*; sirs, I hope you think not that I speak meere fancies to you, or any think that is *questionable* and *uncertaine*: you can not say so without denying your selves to be Christians; no nor without contradicting the *light of Nature*, and debasing your soules below the Heathen who believe an *immortality of soules* in a different state of *joy* or *misery* in the *Life to come*: And if you are once *below Heathens*, what are you better then *Bruit beasts*? Better in your *naturall faculties* and *powers*, as being not made *Bruites* by your *Creatour*: But worse as to the *use* of them, and the *consequents* to yourselves, because you are *voluntary self-abusing Bruites*. But to live here as a *Bruit*, will not make you *die* and be hereafter as a *Bruit*: To believe you shall die as a *Beast*, will not prevent the *miserable life* of an impenitent sinner. It will not make your soules to be *Mortall*, to believe they are *mortall*; no more then it will make a *beast* to be *Immortall*, if he could but think so. The coffin-maker and the grave-maker, if they never read a Book, can tell you that it is no controversie whether you must goe hence. And *Faith* and *Reason* can both assure you,
that

that your *soules* lie not downe with your Bodies in the dust, nor are *annihilated* by the falling of your earthly tabernacle; no more then the *spirits when the glass* is broken that held them, or then your *Bodies* are *annihilated* when you put off your *clothes*, or rise out of your beds: Or then the *bird* is *annihilated* that is got out of the *shell*: or the *infant* that is by nature cast out of the *wombe*: nor no more then the *Angels* that appeared to the Apostles or others, were *annihilated* when they *disappeared*: Or (if I must speak more suitably to the ungodly) no more then the *Devil* that some time *appeareth* in a bodily shape is *annihilated* when that *appearance vanisheth*. As I suppose there is never a person in all this populous city that was here but seven-score years agoe; so I suppose there is none of you that are here to day, that expect to be here so long a time: They are gone before you into a world where there is no *presumption* or *security*: and you are going after them and are almost there. As easily as you set here, I tell you all, *you are going after them apace, and are almost there*:

O Sirs, that *world* is a *world of Light*. To the damned *soules* it is called *Outer darkness*

darkness, because they have none of the *Light of Glory* or of *Comfort*: But they shall have the *Light* of a *self-accusing, self-tormenting Conscience* that is gone out of the *darknes* of *self-ignorance* and *self-deceit*, and is fully cured of its *slumber* and *insensibility*.

Do you now take a *civilized person* for a *Saint*? you will not do so long.

Doth the *Baptisme of water only* goe with you now for the *Regeneration of the Spirit*? It will not be so long: you will shortly be undeceived.

Doth a *ceremonious Pharisee* thank God for the *sincerity* and *Holynes* which he never had? He will shortly be taught better to know the nature of *Holyness* and *sincerity*, and that God Justifyeth not all that Justifie themselves.

Doth a little *formal heartless, Hypocritical devotion*, now cover a sensuall, worldly mind? The cover will be shortly taken off, and the nakednes and deformity of the Pharisee will appeare.

Doth the *name of a christian*, and the *heartless use of outward ordinances*, and that *good esteeme of others*, now goe for *Godlyness* and saving grace? The Autumne is at hand, when these leaves will all lie in
the

the dirt, and will goe for fruit no longer.

Do you take it *now* for true Religion to be *hot* for *lust*, and *pride*, and *gain*, and cold for *God* and your *Salvation*? and to obey *God* so far as will stand with your *outward prosperity*, and as the *flesh*, or your other *Masters* will give leave? This is an Opinion that never accompanied any man *beyond the grave*.

Do you think to be saved by all that devotion, which gives *God* but the *leavings of the flesh and world*, and by a Religion that gives him but the *outer rooms* (when *pleasure* and *gain* are next your hearts) and that makes him but an underling to your *Covetousness* and *Ambition*? Think so if you can, when you are gone hence.

Cannot the Preacher *now* make the *ungodly* to know that they are *ungodly*, the *un-sanctified* to know they are but *carnal*, and the *Pharisee* to know that his Religion is *Vain*? *Death* can convince the awakened soul of all this in a moment.

You can choose whether you will believe us: but *Death* will so speak as to be believed. You must be *Voluntary* in knowing your misery *now*: but then you shall know it against your wills. You must open the
windows

windows, or must open your *eyes*, if you will see your selves by the Light which *we* bring to you : But *Death* irresistibly throws open all. To say in pride and obstinacy, [*I will not believe it*] will now serve turn to quiet your consciences, and make you seem as safe as any : But when God saith *You shall feel it*, your *unbelief* is uneffectual: It can then torment you, but it can no longer ease you. There's then no room for [*I will not believe it.*] God can without a word perswade you of that which you were resolved you would never be perswaded of.

This day while you all sit here in the *body*, you are every one *affected* according as you *apprehend* your state to be, whether it be indeed as you apprehend it, or not : But when *Death* hath opened you the door into eternity, you will be all *affected* with your conditions as they are indeed.

To day, you are here *quiet* because you *think* your souls are safe : and some are *troubled* that *think* they are in a state of misery : and its like that some on both sides are *mistaken* : and the *quiet* of one, and the *disquiet* of another, may arise for want of the *knowledge* of your selves : But

O

Death

Death will rectifie both these errors : and then if you are *unsanctified*, no *false opinions*, no *unbelief*, no *confident conceits* of your integrity, will abate your desperation, or give any ease to your tormented minds : Nor will there be any doubts, or fears or despairing self-afflicting thoughts to disquiet those that Christ hath justified, or abate their Joyes.

O how many thousands will then think much otherwise of themselves then they now do ! *Death* turns you out of the *company of flatterers* ; and calls you out of the *world of error* , where men *laugh and cry in their sleep* : and bringeth you among *awakened souls*, where all things are called by their proper names , and all men are taken *by themselves* to be as they are indeed. *Serious Religion* is not *there* a derision ; nor *Loving and seeking and serving God with all the heart and soul and might*, is not there taken for *unnecessary preciseness*. *Holiness* is not *there* called *humour* or *Hypocrisie* : Nor is the *Pharisaical Ceremonious Hypocrite*, taken for a man of the most *prudent, safe and moderate Religion*. God judgeth not as man , by outward appearances ; but with righteous judgement : *that*
which

which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God, Luke 16. 15. And he will make you then to judge of your selves as he hath judged you. Though Wisdom now be justified but of her children, it shall then be justified by all: Not by a sanctifying, but a constrained involuntary tormenting light: And though now men can believe as well of themselves, as self-love and the quieting of their consciences doth require; yet then they will have lost this mastery over their own conceits.

O therefore beloved Hearers, seeing you are all going into an irresistibly convincing Light, and are almost in that world where all must fully know themselves: Seeing nothing is covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid that shall not be made known (Mat. 10. 26.) and no unsanctified Hypocrite doth flatter himself into such high presumption, but a dying hour will take him down, and turn it all into endless desperation, if true Conversion prevent it not; I beseech you be more conversant with Conscience, then you have been: Be ashamed that a wanton sot, that knoweth nothing better then flesh to adorn and to be carefull of, should bestow more hours in looking into the Glass, then you bestow to look into Gods

Word and your own Hearts; yea more in a year, then you have thus bestowed in all your lives.

O that you knew what a profitable companion Conscience is for you to converse with. You would not then think your selves so solitary as to be destitute of company and employment, while you have so much to do at home, and one in your bosome that you have so much business with.

And it is a necessary and inseparable companion: If the wife of your bosome should be a shrew, you must not therefore be a stranger to her, because of nearness, necessity and business. If Conscience should give you some foul words, and chide you when you had rather be flattered; yet there is no running from it for more pleasant company: Home is homely: Its there that you must dwell: Conscience is married to you: Please it on safe terms as well as you can: but do not think to overrun it: For it will follow you; or you must return to it home again, when you have gone yout furthest, and done you worst. You have taken Conscience for better and for worse. There is no expectation of a divorce: no not by Death: It will follow you

you to *Eternity*. And therefore O be not strange to *Conscience*, that will be your *Comforter* or *Tormenter* at the hour of *death*; that can do so much to make *sickness* and all *suffering* light or grievous; and to make *death* welcome or terrible to you: Fly not from *conscience* that must dwell with you for ever.

O foolish sinners! do you want *company* and *business* to pass away your *time*? Are you fain to go to *Cards* or *Dice* to waste this *treasure*, which is more precious then your *money*? Do you go to an *Ale-house*, a *Play-house*, or other such *Pesthouse* to seek for *company* and *pastime*: (I say not, to *Bedlam*; for thats as much more honourable then your sinfull society, as the place that *cureth* or *restraineth* the mad, is better then that which *makes* them mad.) Do you forget what *company* and *business* you have at *home*. As you love your peace and happiness, instead of conversing with vain, lascivious, or ungodly persons, O spend that time in converse with your *Consciences*. You may there have a thousand times more profitable discourse. Be not offended to give *Conscience* a sober faithfull answer, if it ask you, What you have done with all your *Time*? and how you have

lived in the world? and how you have obeyed the calls of grace? and how you have entertained Christ into your hearts? and whether you have obeyed him or his enemy? and whether you have been led by the spirit or the flesh? and what forwardness the work of your salvation is in, for which you came into the world? and what assurance you have of your Justification and Salvation? and what readiness to die? Think it not presumption in Conscience thus to examine you: Though you have perhaps unthankfully disdained to be thus examined by your Pastors, your external Guides, whose office it is to help you, and watch for your souls; yet do not disdain to be accountable to your selves. Accountable you must be ere long to God: And that friend that would help you to make ready such accounts, on which so great a weight dependeth, me thinks should be welcomed with a thousand thanks. Ministers and Conscience should be acceptable to you, that come on so necessary a work.

The chidings of Conscience are more friendly language then the flattery of your ignorant or proud associates: and should be more gratefull to you then the laughter of fools, which is like the crackling of thorns

thorns in the fire, (Eccles. 7.6.) Thy own home though it be a house of mourning , is better for thee then such a sinfull house of mirth. Hear but what Conscience hath to say to you. No one will speak with you, that hath words to speak, which nearlyer concern you. I beseech you, Sirs, be more frequent and familiar with Conscience then most men are. Think not the time lost, when you walk and talk with it alone. Confer with it about your endless state, and where you are like to be for ever ; and what way you are in ; and what thoughts you will have of your sins and duties, of the world and God, of yielding or overcoming at the last. Is there no sense in this discourse ? Thou art dead and senseless if thou think so. Is idle talk and prating better ? I hope you are not so distracted as to say so. If you have not blinded, deceived or bribed it, I tell you, Conscience hath other kind of discourse for you ; more excellent and necessary things to talk of, then wantons, or worldlings, or pot-companions have. Its better be giving Conscience an account, what business thou hast had so often in such company ; and how thou wouldst have lookt, if death had found thee there ? then without leave from from God or Conscience , to go thither again.

The thriving way is neither to be still at home, nor still abroad; but to be at home when *homework* is to be done; and to be abroad only for doing and for getting good, in a way of diligent Christian trading; and, to bring that home that is got abroad: but never to go abroad upon loytering, vain, expensive occasions. When you have done with Conscience, converse with others that your business lieth with, and go abroad when its for your *Masters work*: but go not upon idle errands: converse not with prodigal Wasters of your time, and enemies to your souls.

One time or other Conscience will speak, and have a hearing: the sooner the better: Put it not off to a time so unseasonable as Death; I say not unseasonable for Conscience to speak in; but unseasonable for it to begin to speak in; and unseasonable for those terrible words that need a calmer time for answer; and unseasonable for so many things and so great, as self-betrayers use to put off untill then, which need a longer time for due consideration and dispatch.

3. And I beseech you consider, with what amazing horror it must needs surprise you, to find on a sudden and unexpectedly

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*Steddy when you die, that all is worse with you then you imagined or would believe? After a whole life of confident presumption, to be suddenly convinced by so dreadful an experience, of your so long and wilfull a mistake! To find in a moment, that you have flattered your souls, into so desperate a state of woe! To see and feel all the selfish cavils and reasonings confuted, in one hour, which the wisest and holiest men on earth, could never beat you from before! O Sirs, you know not now, what a day, what a conviction, that will be! You know not what it is for a guilty soul to to pass out of the Body, and find it self in the plague of an unsanctified state, and hated of the Holy God, that never would know it till it was too late. You know not what it is to be turned by Death into that world of spirits, where all self-deceit is detected by experience: and all must undergo a righteous judgement; where blindness and self-love can no more perswade the miserable that they are happy; the unholy that they are sanctified; the fleshly minded men that they are spiritual; the lovers of the world, that they are the Lovers of God: Men cannot there believe what they list: nor take that for a truth which makes
for*

for their *security*, be it never so false; Men cannot there *believe* that they are *accepted* of God, while they are in the *bonds* of their *iniquity*; or that their *hearts* are as good as the best, while their *tongues* and *lives* are opposite to *goodness*; or that they shall be *saved* as soon as the *godly*, though they be *ungodly*.

Its easie for a man to *hear* of *waves*, and *gulfs* and *shipwrack* that never *saw* the *Sea*; and without any *fear* to *hear* of *battels*, that never *saw* the face of an *enemy*: and without any *trouble* to *hear* of *sickness* and *tormenting* pains, and *burning*, and *cutting* off of limbs, that never *felt* or *saw* such things. Its easie for you *here* in these *seats*, in the midst of *health* and *peace* and *quietness*, to *hear* of a *departing* soul, and *where* it shall *appear*, and what it shall there *see*, and how great a *discovery* *Death* will make: But O Sirs, when this must be *your case* (as you know it must be, alas, how speedily!) these matters then will seem *considerable*: They will be *new* and *strange* to those that have heard of them an *hundred* times, because they never heard of them *sensibly* till *now*. One of those souls that have been here before you, and have past that way into eternity, have *other thoughts* of

of these things than *you* have ! O how do *they think now* , of the fearless slumber and stupidity of those that they have left behind ? What think they now of those that wilfully fly the light, and flatter themselves in guilt and misery, and make light of all the Joyes and torments of the other world ? Even as the *dammned Rich man* in *Luke 16.* thought of his poor *Brethren*, that remained in prosperity and presumption upon earth, and little thought what *company he was in*, what a *sight he saw*, and what *he did endure* !

Poor careless souls , you *know not now what it is*, for the *ungodly* to see that they are *ungodly* , by the irresistible light of another world : and for the *unholy* to feel in Hell that they are *unholy* , and to be taught by flames and the wrath of the Almighty, what is the difference between the *sanctified* and the *carnal* , between an *obedient* and a *rebellious* life : While you *sit here*, you *little know* these things : You *see* them not : you *feel* them not : and the Lord grant you may never so know them by wofull experience : that you may scape *such a knowledge* , is the end of all that I am saying to you : But *that will not be*

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be, but by another kind of knowledge, even the knowledge of Belief and serious Consideration.

For your souls sake therefore *come into the Light*, and try your selves, and huddle not over a work of such unspeakable consequence, as the searching of your hearts and judging of *your* spiritual state? O be glad to know *where* you are indeed! Put home the question, *Am I sanctified or not? Am I in the Spirit or in the flesh?* Be glad of any *help* for the sure resolution of such doubts. Take not up with *sleight* and *venturous presumptions*. It is your own case: your *nearest* and your *greatest* case: All lies upon it: *Who* should be so willing of the *plainest* dealing, the *speediest* and the *closest* search as you? O be not surprized by an *unexpected sight* of an *unrenewed miserable* soul at death. It is *beso*, see it *now*, while *seeing it* may do good: If it *be not so*, a faithfull search can do you no harm, but comfort you by the discovery of your sincerity. Say not too late, *I thought* I had been born again of the Spirit, and had been in a state of grace? *I thought* I had been a child of God, and reconciled to him and *Justified by faith!* O what a heart-tearing word would it be

to you, when time is past, to say, *I thought it had been better with me !*

4. Consider also, that *It is one of Satans principal designs for your damnation, to keep you ignorant of your selves.* He knows if he can but make you believe, that you *are Regenerate* when you *are not*, you will never seek to be regenerate : And that if he can make you think that you are *Godly*, when you are *ungodly*, and have the spirit of *Christ* while you are *servants to the flesh*, he may defeat all the labours of your Teachers, and let them call on you to be *Converted* till their heartsake, to no purpose, but leave you as you are : He knows how *light* you'll set by the *Physicion*, if he can but make you *believe* that *you are well !* and how little *care* you'll take for a *pardon*, if you think that you *need it not*, or have *one already*. In vain may we call on you till we are hoarse to *Turn*, and become New creatures, and give up your selves to *Christ*, if you think that you are good Christians, and are in the way to Heaven already.

And when you know before hand, that *here lieth the principal game of the Deceiver*, and that it will be his chief contrivance,

vance , to keep you unacquainted with your sin and danger , till you are past recovery, one would think there should be no need to bid you be *diligent to know your selves.*

5. And I beseech you consider also, that *Without this design there is no likelyhood that Satan could undo you :* If he keep you not *Ignorant of your selves,* he is never like to keep you in *his power :* You come out of *his Kingdom* when you come out of *darkness.* He knoweth that if *once* you did but see how near you stand to the brink of Hell, you would think it time to change your standing.

There is a double *principle* in *Nature,* that would do *something* towards your *Repentance* and *recovery,* if your eyes were opened to *see where you are.*

1. There is since the seduction and ruine of man, by Satans temptations, an *Enmity* put into the *whole Nature of man* against the *Whole Satanical Serpentine Nature :* so that this *Natural enmity* would so much conduce to your deliverance, as that you would not be contented with your *Relation,* if you knew that you are the *drudges* of the *Devil ;* nor would you be charmed
into

into sin so easily, if you *knew* that it is *he* indeed that doth invite you ; nor would you dance after his pipe ; or take his bait, if you *perceived* indeed that it is *his* : no language would be so taking with you, which you *knew* were uttered by *his* voice. It would do much to affright you from his service, if you *knew* that it is *he* indeed that setteth you on work, and is gratified by it. He keepeth men in his *bondage* by making them believe that they are *free* : He perswadeth men to obey *him*, by perswading them that it is *God* that they obey : And he draweth them to *Hell*, by making them believe that they are following *Christ* to *Heaven* ; or at least, that they are following the inclination of their nature in a pardonable infirmity.

2. And the Natural principle of *self-love* would in order to *self-preservation* do much to drive you from your sinfull state, if you did but *know* what a state it is. There is no man so far *hateth himself* as to be *willing* to be *damned*. You cannot choose an habitation in *Hell* : Such a place can never be desired. Sure he that cannot choose but fly from an *enemy*, or a bear that did pursue him, or fly from fire or water or pestilence

pestilence when he perceives his danger, would fly from *Hell*, if he perceived his danger.

I beseech you all that are secure in an unsanctified state, do but look inwards, and help me in preaching this doctrine to your hearts, and tell your selves, whether you do *not think*; that your *state is good*, and that you are the children of God as well as others; and that though you are sinners, yet your sins are pardoned by the blood of Christ, and that you shall be saved if you die in the state that you are in? And are not *these thoughts* the *Reason* why you venture to continue in your *present state*, and look not after so great a change as Scripture speaketh of as necessary?

And I pray you deal plainly with your hearts, and tell me, you careless sinners, young or old, that sit here as quietly as if all were well with you; If you did but *know* that you are at *this hour unregenerate*, and that *without Regeneration* there is no *Salvation*; If you did but *know* that you are yet *carnal and unholy*, and that *without Holiness none shall see God*; If you did but *know* that you are yet in a state
of

of *Enmity* to *God* while you call him *Father*, and of *Enmity* to *Christ* while you call him your *Saviour*, and of *Enmity* to the *Holy Spirit* while you call him your *sanctifier*; If you did but *know* that your *sins* are *unpardoned*, and your *souls unjustified*, and that you are *condemned already*, and shall certainly be *damned* if you die as you are, could you live quietly in such a state? Could you sleep, and eat and drink quietly, and follow your trades, and let time run on, without *repenting* and *returning* unto *God*, if you *knew* that you are *past hope*, if death surprize you in this condition? For the *Lords* sake *Sirs*, rouse up your selves a little, and be serious in a business that concerneth you more then ten thousand natural lives, and tell me, or rather tell *your selves*, If you did but *know* that while you sit here, you are *unrenewed*, and therefore under the *curse* of *God*, and in the *bondage* of the *Devil*, and are hasting towards perdition, and are *gone for ever*, if you be not sanctified and made new creatures before you die; could you then put off *this Sermon* with a sleepy careless hearing, and go home and talk of common matters, and no more mind it, as you have done by *Sermons* untill now? Could

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you forbear going alone and there bethinking your selves, *O what a sinful, dreadfull condition are we in ! What will become of us if we be not regenerate before we die ! Had we no Understandings ? no Hearts ? no life or sense ? that we have lingered so long, and lived so carelessly in such a state ? O where had we been now if we had died unregenerate ! How near have we been oft to Death ? how many sicknesses might have put an end to life and hope ? Had any of them cut off the slender thread that our lives have hanged on so long, and had we died before this day, we had been new in Hell without remedy.* Could any of you that knew this to be your case, forbear to betake your selves to God, and cry to him in the bitterness of your souls, [*O Lord, what Rebels, what wretches have we been ? We have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and are no more worthy to be called thy children ! O how sin hath captivated our understandings, and conquered our very sense, and made us live like men that were dead as to the Love and service of God, and the work of our salvation, which we were created and redeemed for ! O Lord, have mercy upon these blinded senseless miserable souls ! Have mercy upon these despisers and abusers of thy mer-*

cy! O save us or we perish! Save us from our sins, from Satan, from thy curse and wrath! Save, us or we are undone and lost for ever! Save us from the unquenchable fire, from the worm that never dieth! from the bottomless pit, the outer darkness, the horrid gulf of endless misery! O let the bowels of thy compassion yearn over us; O save us for thy Mercy sake; Shut not out the cries of miserable sinners. Regenerate, renew and sanctifie our hearts; O make us new creatures! O plant thine Image on our souls, and incline them towards thee, that they may be wholly thine; O make us such as thou commandest us to be; Away with our sins, and sinfull pleasures, and sinfull company! We have had too much, too much of them already! Let us now be thine, associated with them that Love and fear thee; imployed in the works of Holiness and obedience all our dayes! Lord, we are willing to let go our sins, and to be thy servants: or if we be not, make us willing.]

What say you Sirs, if you knew that you were this hour in a state of condemnation, could you forbear making haste with such confessions, complaints and earnest supplications to God?

And could you forbear going present-

ly to some faithfull Minister or godly friend, and telling him your case and danger, and begging his advice, and prayers, and asking him, what a poor sinner must do to be recovered, pardoned and saved, that is so deep in sin and misery, and hath despised Christ and grace so long? Could you tell how to sleep quietly many nights more, before you had earnestly sought out for help, and made this change? How could you choose but presently betake your selves to the company, and converse, and examples of the godly that are within your reach? (For when ever a man is truly changed, his friendship, and company is changed, if he have opportunity.) And how could you choose but go and take your leave of your old companions, and with tears and sorrow tell them how foolishly and sinfully you have done, and what wrong you have done each others souls, and intreat them to repent and do so no more, or else you will renounce them, and fly from their company as from a Pesthouse?

Can a man forbear thus to fly from Hell, if he saw that he is as near it as a condemned Traytor to the Gallows? He that will beg for bread, if he be hungry, and rather lay by shame, then famish, would beg for grace

if he *saw* and *felt* how much he *needeth* it :
 (And *seeing* it, is the way to *feel* it) He
 that will *seek* for *medicines* when he is *sick*,
 and would do almost *any thing* to escape a
 temporal *death*, would he not seek out to
 Christ the remedy of his soul, if he *knew*
 and *felt*, that otherwise there is no recove-
 ry ; and would he not do much against
 eternal death ? *Skin for skin, and all that a*
man hath, he will give for his life ;] was
 a truth that the Devil knew and maketh
 use of in his temptations. And will a man
 then be *regardless* of his soul, that *knows*
 he hath an *immortal soul* ? and of *life eter-*
nal, that *knows* his danger of *eternal death* ?

O Sirs, it is *not possible*, but the *true*
knowledge of your state of sin and danger
 would do very much to save you from it.
 For it is a *wilfull-chosen* state. All the De-
 vils in Hell cannot bring you to it, and
 continue you in it *against your will*. You
 are willing of the sin, though unwilling of
 the punishment : And if you truly knew
 the *punishment* and *your danger* of it, you
 would be the more unwilling of the *sin* :
 for God hath affixed *punishment* to *sin* for
this end, that they that else would *love*
 the *Serpent*, may *hate* it for the *sting* : Will
 you not say, He is a *beast* and not a *man*

that will avoid no danger but what he *seeth*? *Foreseeing* is to a man, what *seeing* is to a *beast*: If he *see* it before his eyes, a *beast* will not easily be driven into a Cole-pit or a gulf: he will draw back and strive if you go about to kill him. And is he a *man*, or some monster that wants a name, that will go on to Hell, when he *seeth* it as it were before him? and that will continue in a state of sin, when he *knows* he must be damned in Hell for ever, if he so continue to the end? Indeed sin is the *deformity* and *monstrosity* of the soul. He is a monster of *Blindness* that *seeth* not the folly and peril of such a state, and that a state of *Holiness* is *better*: He is a monster of *stupidity* that finds himself in such a state, and doth not *feel* it, but maketh light of it; And he is monster of *slothfulness* that will not *stir* when he finds himself in such a case, and seek for mercy, and value the remedy, and use the means, and forsake his sinfull course and company, till further mercy take him up and bring him home, and make him welcome, as one that *was lost* but now *is found*, *was dead* but *is alive*.

I do not doubt for all these expostulations, but some men may be such monsters,

sters, as thus to see that they are in a state of wrath and misery, and yet continue in it.

As 1. Such as have but a *glimmering* insufficient sight of it, and a *half-belief*, while a greater *belief* and *hope* of the contrary, (that is, *Presumption*) is predominant at the heart: But these are rather to be called men *ignorant* of their *misery* than men that *know* it; and men that *believe* it not, then *men that do believe* it; as long as the *Ignorance* and *Presumption* is the prevailing part.

2. Such as by the *rage* of appetite and *passion* are hurried into deadly sin, and so continue, when ever the tempter offereth them the bait, against their Conscience, and some apprehension of their misery. But these have commonly a prevalent *self-flattery* secretly within encouraging and upholding them in their sin, and telling them that the reluctancies of their consciences are the spirits strivings against the flesh, and their fits of remorse are true repentance; and though they are *sinner*s, they hope they are *pardoned*, and shall be *saved*, so that *these do not know* themselves *indeed*.

3. Such as by their *deep engagements* to
P 4 the

the world, and love of its prosperity, and a custom in sinning, are so hardened, and cast into a slumber, that though they have a secret knowledge or suspicion that their case is miserable, yet they are not wakened to the due consideration and feeling of it: and therefore they go on as if they knew it not: But these have not their knowledge in exercise: It is but a candle in a dark lanthorn, that now and then gives them a convincing flash, when the right side happens to be towards them, or like lightning that rather frightens and amazeth them then directeth them. And (as I said of the former) as to the act, their self-ignorance is the predominant part, and therefore they cannot be said indeed to know themselves. Now and then a convinced apprehension, or a fear, is not the tenor of their minds.

4. Such as being in youth or health do *do promise themselves long life, or any others that foolishly put away the day of death, and think they have yet time enough before them; and therefore though they are convinced of their misery, and know they must be Converted or Condemned, do yet delay, and quiet themselves with purposes to Repent hereafter, when Death drawes*
near

neer and there is no other remedie, but they must leave their sins, or give up all their hopes of Heaven. Though these know somewhat of their present misery, it is but by such a *flashy uneffectuall* knowledge, as is afore described: and they know little of the *wickedness* of their hearts while they confesse them wicked. Otherwise they could not imagine that *Repentance* is so *easy* a work to *such as they*, as that they can performe it when their hearts are further hardened, and that so easily and certainly as that their salvation may be ventured on it by delays. Did they know themselves, they would know the *backwardness* of their hearts, and manifold *difficulties* should make them see the madnels of *delays* and of longer resisting and abusing the grace of the spirit that *must convert* them if ever they be saved.

5. Such as have *light to shew them their misery*, but live where they heare not the discovery of the *Remedie*, and are left without any knowledge of a Saviour. I deny not but *such* may go on in a state of misery though they know it, when they know no way out of it.

6. Such as *Believe not the Remedie* though they heare of it, but think that Christ is
not

not to be believed in as the *Saviour* of the world.

7. Such as *Believe* that Christ is the Redeemer, but *believe not* that he *will have mercy upon them*, as supposing their hearts are *not qualified* for his salvation, nor *ever will be*, because the day of grace is past, and he hath *concluded* them under a sentence of reprobation; and therefore thinking that there is *no hope* and that their endeavours would be all in vaine, they *cast off* all endeavours, and give up themselves to the *pleasurs of the flesh*, and say, *It is as good be damned for some thing or for a greater mattter, as for a lesse.*

So that there are *three sorts of Despaire* that are not equally dangerous 1. *A Despaire* of pardon and salvation arising from *Infidelity*, as if the *Gospell were not true*, nor *Christ a Saviour to be trusted* with our soules, if predominant, is damnable. 2. *A Despaire* of pardon and salvation, arising from a *mis-understanding* of the *Promise*, as if it pardoned not such sins as ours, and denied mercy to those that have sinned so long as we; this is not damnable necessarily of it selfe, because it implyeth *faith in Christ*; and not *Infidelity*, but *misunderstanding* hindereth the apply-
ing

ing comforting act: And therefore this actuall personal despaire, is accompanied with a General actual Hope and with a particular personal, virtual Hope. 3. A Despaire of pardon and salvation, upon the *misunderstanding* of ourselves, as thinking both that we are *graceless*, and *alwaies shall be so*, because of the blindness and hardness of our hearts: of this Despaire I say as of the former, it is joyned with faith and with General and Virtual Hope: and therefore is not the Despaire that of its self condemneth. Many may be saved that are too much guilty of it.

But if either of these two later sorts shall so far prevaile as to turne men off from a Holy to a fleshy worldly interest and life, and make them say, [*Wee will take our pleasure while we may, and will have something for our soules before we lose them*] and do accordingly; this kind of Desperation is damnable by the effects, because it takes men off the means of life, and giveth them up to damning finnes.

Thus I have shewed you of seven sorts of persons, that may know themselves, their sin and danger, with such an un-effectuall partiall knowledge as I have described, and yet continue in that sin and misery.

And

And in two cases even *sound Believers* many possibly go on to *sin*, when they *see the sin*: and not only *see the danger* of it, but despairingly thinke it *greater then it is*: As 1. in case of common *unavoidable failings*, *infirmities*, and *low degrees* of grace: we are *all imperfect*: and yet we all know that it is our *duty to be perfect* (as *perfection* is opposed to *sinfull*, and not to *innocent imperfection*) And yet *this knowledge maketh us* not perfect. We *know* we *should* be more humbled, and more believing, and more watchfull, and Love God more, and feare and trust him more, and be more fruitfull, and diligent, and obedient and zealous: and yet we *are not* What we *know* we *should* be in any of these. In these we *all live in sin against knowledge*: els we *should* be *all* as good as we *know* we ought to be, which no man is. And if through temptation any of us *should* be ready to despair because of any of these infirmities, because we cannot Repent, or Love God, watch, or Pray, or Obey more perfectly, or as we *should*, yet *Grace* ceaseth not to be *Grace*, though in the *least degree*, because we are *ready to despair* for want of *more*. Nor will the *sincerity* of this *spark*, or *graine of Mustard seed*, be *unsuccessfull* as

as to our salvation, because we *think so*, and *take ourselves* to be *unsincere*, and our sanctification to be *none*; Nor yet because we cannot be as obedient and good as we know we should be. For the Gospell saith not [*He that knoweth he hath faith or sincerity, shall be saved: and he that knoweth it not, shall be damned: or he that is lesse holy or obedient then his conscience tells him he should be, shall be damned*] But *he that Believeth and Repenteth, shall be saved*, whether he *know* it to be done in sincerity or no: and *he that doth not, shall be damned*, though he never so confidently *think* he doth. So that in the *Degrees* of Holynes and obedience, all Christians ordinarily *sin against knowledge*.

2. And besides what is *ordinary*, some *extraordinarily* in the time of a Powerfull temptation go further then ordinarily they do. And some under dull Flegmatick melancholy, or cholerick diseases or distempers of body, or under a diseased violent appetite, may transgress more against their knowledge, then otherwise they would do: when the spirits are flatted, the thoughts confused, the reason weakened, the passion strengthened, and the executive faculties undisposed, so that their actions
are

are but imperfectly *Humane* or *Merall*; (imperfectly capable of vertue or vice, good or evill) it is no wonder here if poor soules not only perceive their sin, but think it and the danger to be tenfold greater then they are, and yet go on against their knowledge, and yet have true grace.

This much I have said both to stay you from *misunderstanding* what I said before, concerning the Power of conviction to conversion (for few Auditoryes want hearers that will be still *excepting*, if *Caution* stop not every hole) and also to help you to the *fuller understanding* of the *matter its self* of which I treat. But *exceptio firmat regulam in non exceptis*, Exceptions strengthen and not weaken any Rule or proposition, in the points not excepted. Still I say that out of these cases the true knowledge of a sinfull miserable state, is so great a helpe to bring us out of it, that its hardly imaginable how rationally men can willfully continue in a state of such exceeding danger, if they be but well acquainted that they are in it. I know a Hardned heart hath an unreasonable obstinate opposition against the meanes of its own recovery: But yet men have some use of
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Reason and self preserving Love and *care*, or they are not *men* (and if they be not *men*, they cannot be *sinfull men*) And though *little transient lightnings* oft come to nothing, but leave some men in *greater darkness*; yet could we but set up a *standing Light* in all your consciences, could we *fully convince* and *resolve* the unregenerate that they cannot be saved in the carnall state and way that they are in, but must be sanctified or never saved, what hopes should we have that all the subtilties and snares of Satan, and all the pleasures and gaine of sin, and all the allurements of ungodly company could no longer hinder you from falling down at the feet of mercy, and begging forgiveness through the blood of Christ, and giving up yourselves in Covenant to the Lord, and speedily and resolutely betaking yourselves to an holy life! Could I but make you *thoroughly known unto your selves*, I should hope that all the un sanctified that hear me, would date their Conversion from this very day; and that you would not delay till the next morning, to bewail your sin and misery, and fly to Christ, lest you should die and be past hope this night.

And doth so much of *our work* and
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of *your recovery* lie upon *this point*; and yet shall we not be able to accomplish it? Might you be brought into the way to Heaven, if we could but perswade you that you are yet *out of the way*, and will you be undone, because you will not *suffer so small and reasonable* a part of the *cure* as this is? O God forbid! O that we knew how to illuminate your minds so far as to make you find that you *are lost*! How ready would Christ be then to *find you*, and to *receive and welcome* you, upon your return! Here is the *first difficulty*, which if we could but overcome, we should hope to conquer *all the rest*. Had we but a wedge to cleave *this knot*, the rest would the more easily be done. Could we draw but this one pin of *self-deceit*, the frame of Satans building were like to tumble down. O that any of you that know the nature of self-deceit, and know the accesses to the inwards of a sinner, and know the fallacious reasonings of the heart, could *tell us* but how we might undeceive them! O that any of you that know the nature of humane understanding, with its several maladies and their cure, and know the power of saving truth, could *tell us what key* will undo *this lock*!

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what medicine will cure this disease, of wilfull, obstinate, self-deceiving? Think but on the case of our poor people, and of ours, and sure you cannot choose but pitty both them and us. We are all professors of the Christian faith, and all say we believe the word of God: This word assureth us that all men are fallen in *Adam*, and are by *nature children of wrath*, and increase in sin and misery, till supernatural grace recover them. It tells us that the Redeemer is become by *office*, the *Physition* or *Saviour* of souls, washing away *their guilt* by *his blood*, and renewing and cleansing their *corrupted natures* by *his Spirit*: It tell us that he will *freely* work the *cure*, for all that will take him for their *Physition*, and will *forgive* and *save* them, that *penitently fly to him*, and *value*, and *accept*, and *trust upon his grace*: And that, *except* they be thus made *new creatures*, all the world cannot save them from everlasting wrath. This is the Doctrine that we all believe, or *say* we do believe: Thus doth it open the case of sinners. We come now, according to our office, and the trust reposed in us, and we tell our Hearers what the Scripture saith of man, and what it commandeth us to tell

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them: We tell them of their *fall*, their *sin* and *misery*; of the *Redeemer*, and the *sure* and *free salvation*, which they may *have* if they will but *come to him*. But, alas, we cannot make them believe that they are so *sick* as to have so *much need* of the *Physician*: and that they are *dead*, and have need of a *new creation*, as to the *inclinations* of their hearts, and the *end* and *bent* and *business* of their lives. We are sent to tender them the *mercy* of Christ, but we cannot make them believe that they are *miserable*. We are sent to offer them the *riches*, and *eye salve*, and *white rayment* of the Gospel: but we cannot make them know that they are *poor*, and *blind*, and *naked*: We are sent to call them to *Repent* and *Turn* that they may be *saved*; and we cannot make them know that they are so far out of the way as to *need a change* of *heart* and *life*. Here they sit before us, and we *look on them* with *pitty*, and know not how to *help* them. We *look on them* and *think*, alas, poor souls, you little see what death will quickly make you see. You will then see that there is no salvation, by all the blood and merits of Christ for any but the sanctified; but O that we could *now* but make you *understand* it. We look on them with

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compassion, and think, Alas, poor souls, as easily and quietly as you sit here, a change is near. It will be thus with you but a little while, and where will you be next? We know as sure as the word of God is true, that they must be converted and sanctified, or be lost for ever: and we cannot make them believe, but that the work is done already. The Lord knoweth, and our consciences witness to our shame, that we be not half so sensible of their misery, nor so compassionate towards them as we ought to be: but yet sometimes our hearts melt over them, and fain we would save them from the *wrath to come*; and we should have great hopes of the success, if we could but make them *know their danger*: It melts our hearts to look on them and think that they are so *near damnation*, and never like to *scape it*, till they *know it*, till they *know* that their *corruption* is so great, that nothing but the *quickning spirit* can recover them, and nothing less then to *become new creatures* will serve the turn: But if we would never so fain we cannot make them *know it*: O that we knew how to acquaint them with their case? O that we knew how to get within them, and to open the windows, that

the light of Christ might shew them their condition ! But when we have done all, we find it past our power. We *know* they will be *past help in Hell*, if they *die* before they are *regenerate* : And could we but get *themselves* to *know* it, we could not but hope that they would better look about them, and be saved : but we are *not able* : its more then we can do : We cannot get the grossest worldling, the basest sensualist, the filthiest lecher, the proudest child of the Spirit of pride, to know that he is *in a state of condemnation*, and *must be sanctified or be damned* : much less can we procure the *formal Pharisee*, thus to *know himself*. We can easily get them to confess that they are *sinners*, and *deserve* damnation, and cannot be saved without *Christ* : But this will not serve : The best Saint on earth must say as much as this comes to. There are *converted and unconverted sinners* : *sanctified and unsanctified sinners* : *Pardoned and unpardoned sinners* : *Sinners* that are members of Christ, and the children of God, and heirs of Heaven ; and *sinners* that are *not so*, but *contrary*. They must know not only that they are *sinners*, but that they are yet *unconverted*, *unsanctified*, *unpardoned sinners* : not only that they cannot be sa-
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ved without *Christ*; but that yet they *have no special interest in Christ*: They will not *Turn*, while they think they are *turned already*: They will not so value and seek for *Conversion*, and *Remission*, and *Adoption*, as to *obtain* them, while they think they *have them all already*. They *will not come to Christ that they may have life*, while they think they have part in *Christ already*. *Paul* after his *Conversion* was a *sinner*, and had *need of Christ*: but *Paul* before his *Conversion* was an *unsanctified, unjustified sinner*, and had *no part in Christ*: *This* is the state of *sin* and *misery* that you must *come out of*, or you are *lost*: And how can you be *brought out of it*, till you know that you are *in it*?

O therefore that we knew how to make you *know it*! How should we make poor sinners see that they are within a few steps of everlasting fire, that we might procure them to *run away* from it, and be *saved*! we cry so oft, and lose our labour, and leave so many in their security and self-deceits, that we are too discouraged, and remit our desires, and lose our compassion, and our selves alas grow dull and too insensible of their case, and preach too oft as coldly as if we could be content to let

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them perish. We are too apt to grow weary of holding the light to men asleep, or that shut their eyes and will not see by it. When all that we have said is not regarded, and we know not what more to say then hath been said so long in vain, this flats our spirits; this makes so many of us *preach* almost as *carelessly* as we are *heard*. Regardless sleepy hearers, make regardless sleepy Preachers. Frequent frustration abateth hope: And the *fervour* and *diligence* of *prosecution* ceaseth, as *hope* abateth. This is our fault: *Your* insensibility is no good excuse for *ours*: But its a fault not easily avoided.

And when we are stopt at the *first door*, and cannot conquer Satans *out-works*, what hopes have we of going further? If all that we can say, will not convince you that you are yet un sanctified and unjustified, how shall we get you to the duties that belong to such, in order to the attainment of this desirable state?

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And here I think it not *unseasonable* ^{1^o} to *inform* you of the reason why the most able faithfull Ministers of Christ do *search so deep*, and *speak so hardly* of the case of unrenewed souls, as much displeaseth many of their hearers, and makes them say, they are too severe and terrible preachers: The zealous Antinomian saith, they are Legalists; and the prophane Antimonian saith, they rail, and preach not mercy, but judgement only, and would drive men to despair, and make them mad. But will they tell God he is a Legalist for making the Law, even the Gospel Law as well as the Law of Nature, and commanding us to preach it to the world? Shall they escape the Sentence by reproaching the Law-maker? Will not God judge the world? and judge them by a Law? and will he not be just and beyond the reach of their reproach? O sinner, this is not the smallest part of thy terror, that it is the Gospel that speaks this terror to thee, and excludes thee from salvation unless thou be made new: It is mercy it self that thus condemneth thee, and judgeth thee to endless misery. You are mistaken Sirs, when you say we preach not Mercy, and say

we preach not the Gospel, but the Law : It is the Gospel that saith, *Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!* and that if any man have not the spirit of Christ, the same is none of his, John 3. 3, 5. Rom. 8. 9. The same Gospel that saith, *He that believeth shall be saved,* saith also, that *He that believeth not shall be damned;* Mark 16. 16. Will you tell Christ, the Saviour of the world, that he is not mercifull, because he talks to you of Damnation? Mercy it self when it tells you that *There is no condemnation,* doth limit this pardon to them that are in Christ Jesus; who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,] Rom. 8. 1. It is sanctifying Mercy that must save you, if ever you be saved, as well as justifying Mercy. And will you refuse this Mercy, and by no entreaty yield to have it, and yet think to be saved by it? What saved by that Mercy which you will not have? And will you say, *We preach not Mercy,* because we tell you, that *Mercy will not save you, if you continue to reject it?* To be saved by Mercy without Sanctification, is to be saved and not saved: to be saved by Mercy without Mercy: Your words have no better sense then this: And are those afraid lest Preachers should make them

them mad by shewing them their need of mercy, that are no Wiser then to cast away their souls upon such senseless self-contradicting conceits as these?

I beseech you tell us *whose words* are they think you that say, *Without holiness none shall see God!* Heb. 12. 14. and that *He that is in Christ, is a new Creature*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. and such like passages which offend you; Are they *ours*, or are they *Gods*? Did we indite the Holy Scriptures, or did *the Holy Ghost*? Is it long of *us*, if there be any words there that cross your flesh, and that you call *bitter*? Can *we* help it, if God *will save none but sanctified believers*? If you have any thing to say against it, you must say it to *him*: We are sure that *this is in his word*: and we are sure *he cannot lye*: and therefore we are sure *its true*: We are sure that he *may do with his own as he list*, and that he *oweth you nothing*, and that he may give his pardon and salvation to *whom, and upon what terms* he please: And therefore *we are sure* he doth you no wrong. But if you think otherwise, reproach not *us* that are but *messengers*: but prepare your charge, and make it good against *your maker*, if you *dare* and *can*: you shall shortly come before him, and be put to it to justify your selves: If
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If you can do it by recrimination, and can prevent your condemnation, by condemning the *Law* and the *Judge*, try your strength and do your worst.

Ah poor worms ! dare you lift up the head, and move a tongue, against the Lord ! Did *Infinite Wisdom* it self want *Wisdom*, to make a *Law* to rule the world ? And did *Infinite Goodness* want *Goodness* to deal mercifully, and as was best, with man ! And shall *Justice* it self be judged to be *unjust* ? And that by *you* ! By such silly, ignorant, naughty and unrighteous ones as *you* ! As if *you* had the *Wisdom* and *Goodness*, which you think *God* wanted when he made his *Laws* !

And whereas you tell us of *preaching terribly to you*, we cannot help it, if the true and righteous Threatnings of *God* be terrible to the guilty : It is because we know the *Terrors of the Lord*, that we preach them, to warn you to prevent them. And so did the Apostles before us, 2 Cor. 5. 11. Either its true that the *unquenchable fire* will be the portion of *impenitent, unbelieving, fleshly, worldly, unsanctified men*, or it is not true : If it were not true, the word of *God* were not true : and then what should you do with any *preaching* at all, or any *religion* !

on ! But if you confess it to be *true*, do you think in reason, it should be *silenced*? or can we *tell* men of so *terrible* a thing as *Hell*, and tell them that it will certainly be *their lot*, unless they be *new creatures*, and not *speak terribly* to them ! O Sirs, it is the wonder of my soul that it seemeth *no more terrible*, to all the ungodly that think they do believe it. Yea, and I would it did seem *more terrible* to the *most*, that it might affright *you* from your sin to *God*, and you might be saved. If you were running ignorantly into a *Cole-pit*, would you revile him that told you of it, and bid you stop if you love your life? Would you tell him that he speaks *bitterly* or *terribly* to you? It is not the *Preacher* that is the *cause* of your danger: he doth but *tell you* of it, that you may *scape*. If you are *saved*, you may thank *him*: but if you are *lost*, you may thank *your selves*. Its *you* that *deal bitterly* and *terribly* with *your selves*. *Telling* you of *Hell*, doth not *make Hell*: *Warning* you of it, is not *causing it*: Nor is it *God* that is *unmercifull*, but *you* are foolishly cruel and unmercifull to *your selves*. Do not think to *despise* the *patience* and *mercy* of the Lord, and then think to escape by accusing him of being

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mercifull, and by saying, Its *terrible doctrine* that we preach to you *impenitent sinners*; I confess to thee it is *terrible*, and *more terrible* then thy *senseless heart* imagineth, or is yet aware of: One day, if grace prevent it not, thou shalt find it ten thousand times more terrible then thou canst apprehend it now. When thou *seest* thy *Judge* with millions of his Angels coming to *condemn thee*, thou wilt then say his *Laws are terrible* indeed. Thou hast to do with a *holy, jealous God*, who is a *consuming fire*, Heb. 12. 29. and can *such a God* be despised and not be *terrible* to thee? He is called, *The Great, the Mighty and the Terrible God*, Neh. 9. 32. Deut. 7. 21. *With God is terrible Majesty*, Job 37. 22. *He is terrible out of his holy place*, Psal. 68. 35. *He is terrible to the greatest, even to the Kings of the earth*, Psal. 76. 12. Its time for you therefore to *tremble and submit*, and think how *unable* you are to contend with him: and not *revile* his word or works because they are *terrible*, but *fear* him for them, and *study* them on purpose that you may *fear* and *glorifie* him: And as *David*, Psal. 66. 3. 5. [*Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! Through the greatness of thy power shall thy enemies submit themselves*
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unto thee ——— Come and see the works of the Lord! He is terrible in his doings toward the children of men:] Psal. 99. 3. [Let them praise thy Great and terrible name, for it is Holy.] And will you reproach God or his word or works, or Ministers, with that which is the matter [of his Praise? If it be terrible to hear of the wrath of God, how terrible will it be to feel it? Choose not a state of terror to your selves, and preaching will be less terrible to you. Yield to the sanctifying work of Christ, and receive his spirit: and then that which is terrible to others, will be comfortable to you. What terror is it to the Regenerate (that knoweth himself to be such) to hear that none but the Regenerate shall be saved? What terror is it to them that *mind the things of the spirit*, to hear of the misery of a *fleshly mind*, and that they that live after the *flesh shall die*? Rom. 8. 8. 13. The word of God is full of terror to the *ungodly*: But return with all your hearts to God, and then what word of God speaks terror to you? Truly Sirs, it is more in your power than ours, to make our preaching easie and less terrible to you! We cannot change our doctrine, but you may change your state and lives:

lives: We cannot preach another Gospel: but you may obey the Gospel which we preach. Obey it and it will be the most comfortable word to you in the world. We cannot make void the word of God: but you may avoid the stroke by penitent submission. Do you think it is fitter for us to change our Masters word, and falsifie the Laws of God Almighty; or for you to change your crooked courses, which are condemned by this word, and to let go the sin which the Law forbiddeth? Its you that must change, and not the Law. Its you that must be conformed to it, and not the Rule that must be crooked to conform to you.

Say not as *Ahab* of *Michaiah*, of the Minister: [*I hate him, for he prophesieth not Good of me, but Evil,*] 1 Kings 22. 8. For a *Balaam* could profess that if the King [*would give him his housefull of silver and gold, he could not go beyond the word of the Lord his God, to do less or more*] Numb. 22. 19. or [*to do either good or bad of his own mind*] as he after speaks, Chap. 24. 13. *What good would it do you for a Preacher to tell you a lye and say that you may be pardoned and saved in an impenitent, unsanctified state? Do you think*

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our saying so, would make it so? Will God falsifie his word to make good ours? Or would he not deal with us as perfidious messengers that had betrayed our trust, and belied him, and deceived yout souls? And would it save or ease an unregenerate man to have Christ condemn the Minister for deceiving him, and telling him that he *may be saved* in such a state?

Do but let go the odious sin that the word of God doth speak so ill of, and then it will speak no ill of you.

Alas Sirs, what would you have a poor Minister do, when Gods command doth cross your pleasure? and when he is sure to offend either God or you? Which should he venture to offend? If he help not the ungodly to know their misery, he offendeth God: If he do it, he offendeth them. If he tell you, that [*All they shall be damned that believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.*] Your hearts rise against him for talking of *Damnation* to you: And yet it is but the words of the Holy Ghost, 2 Thes. 2. 12. which we are bound to preach! [If he tell you that *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.*] you will be angry, (especially if he closely apply it to your selves.) And if he do not tell you so,
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God will be angry : For it is his expresse determination, *Rom. 8. 13.* And *whose* anger think you should a wise man choose ? or whose should he most resolutely avoid ? The anger of the dreadfull God of Heaven, or yours ? *Your* anger we can bear, if there be no remedy ; but his anger is intolerable. When you have fretted, and fumed, and railed, and slandered us and our doctrine, we can *Live* yet ; or if you *kill the Body*, you can do no more : You do but send us *before*, to be witnesses against you, when you come to judgement. *But who can Live*, when God will pour out wrath upon him ? *Numb. 24. 23.* We may keep your *slanders* and *indignation* from our *Hearts* : but it is the *Heart* that the Heart-searching God contendeth with : And who can *heal the Heart* which he will break ? You may reach the *flesh* ; but he that is a *Spirit*, can afflict and wound the *Spirit* : And a wounded *Spirit* (and wounded by him) *who can bear* ? *Prov. 18. 14.* Would you not *your selves* say he were worse, then mad, that would rather *abuse the Eternal God*, then cross the *misguided desires* of such *worms* as you ? that would *displease God* to please you, and *sell his Love* to purchase yours ? Will you be *instead of God* to us when we have

have lost his favour? Will you *save us* from him, when he sendeth for our souls by death, or sentenceth us to Hell by judgement? Silly souls! how happy were you, could you *save yourselves*? Will you be our Gods if we forsake our God? What you that are but *skinfuls of corruption*? that will shortly be choaked with your *own filth and flegme*, and by your friends be laid to rot in silent undiscerned darkness, lest the loathsome sight or smell of you should annoy them. Blame not God to *use them as Enemies and Rebels*, that will *change him* for such *earthen Gods* as you. We have *One God*, and *but One*, and he must be obeyed, whether you like or dislike it: *There is one Law-giver that is able to save and to destroy*, Jam. 4. 12. and he must be pleased, whether it please your carnal minds or not: If your *wisdom now* will take the chair, and judge the *preaching of the Gospel* to be *foolishness*, or the *searching application* of it to be too much *harshness and severity*, I am sure you shall come down ere long, and hear his sentence that will convince you, that the *wisdom of the world* is *foolishness with God*, and the *foolishness of God* (as Blasphemy dare call it) is *wiser then men*, 1 Cor. 3. 19. & 1. 25. And God will be the *final Judge*, and his

word shall stand when you have done your worst. The worst that the *Serpent* can do, is but to *hiss a while* and put forth the *sting*, and *bruise our heel*: but *Gods day* will be the *bruising of his head*, and *Satan shall be bruised under feet*, Rom. 16. 20. —

The *Sun will shine*, and the light thereof discover your deformities, whether you *will or not*. And if adulterers or thieves, that love the works of darkness, will do their worst by force or flattery, they cannot make it cease its shining, though they may *shut their eyes*, or hide themselves in darkness from it light: Faithfull Teachers are the *Lights of the world*, Mat. 5. 14. They are not lighted by the Holy Ghost, to be *put under a bushell*, but *on a candlestick*, that they may give light to all that are in the house, ver. 15. What would you do with Teachers but to *Teach you*? And what should they make known to you, if not *your selves*? Shall not the Physician have leave to tell you of your *diseases*?

Verily Sirs, a sinner under the curse of the Law, unsanctified and unpardoned, is not in a state to be jeasted and dallied with, unless you can play in the flames of Hell? Its plain dealing that he needs. A quibbling coyish, flashy Sermon is not the proper medicine

dicine for a lethargick miserable soul, nor fit to *Break a stony Heart*, nor to bind up a Heart thats kindly broken. *Heaven and Hell* should not be talkt of in a canting, juggling, or pedanick strain. A *Seneca* can tell you that its a *Physicion* that is skilfull, and not one thats eloquent, that we need. If he have also fine and neat expressions, we will not despise them; nor overmuch value them: *utendum, secundum*; Its a cure that we need; and the means are best, be they never so sharp, that will accomplish it. *Serious reverent Gravity* best suiteth with matters of such incomprehensible concernment. You set not a *School-boy* to make an *Oration*, to give an assaulted *City* an alarm, or to call men out to quench a common fire. You may play with words when the case will bear it: But as dropping of beads is too ludicrous for one that is praying to be saved from the flames of *Hell*; so a sleepy, or a histrionical starched speech; is too light and unlikely a means to call back a sinner that is posting to perdition; and must be humbled and renewed by the spirit, or be forever damned. This is your case, Sirs: And do you think the playing of a part upon a stage doth fit your case. O no! so great a business requireth all the serious

earnestness in the speaker that he can use. I am sure you *will* think so ere long. your selves; And you will *then* think well of the Preachers that faithfully acquainted you with your case: and (if they succeed to your perdition) you will *curse* those that smoothed you up in your presumption, and hid your danger, by false doctrine, or misapplication, or seeming to discover it, indeed did hide it, by an hypocritical light, not serious mention of it. God can make use of clay and spittle to open the eyes of men born blind; and of Rams-horns to bring down the walls of *Jericho*: But usually he fitteth the *means* unto the *end*, and *works* on man *agreeably* to his *Nature*: And therefore if a blind understanding must be *enlightned*, you cannot expect that it should be done by *Squibs* and *Glowworms*, but by bringing into your souls the *powerfull celestial truth*, which shall shew you the *hidden corners* of your *hearts*, and the *hidden mysteries* of the *Gospel*, and the *unseen things* of the *other world*. If a *hardened heart* be to be *broken*, it is not *stroaking*, but *striking* that must do it. It is not the *sounding Brass*, the *tinkling Cymbal*, the *carnal mind* *pufft up* with *superficial knowledge*, that is the instrument fitted to the *renew-*
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ing of mens souls: But it is he that can acquaint you with what *he himself* hath been savingly acquainted: The heart is not *melted* into Godly sorrow, nor *raised* to the *life of Faith and Love*, by the *bubbles* of a frothy wit, or by a *game at words*, or *useless notions*; but by the *illuminating beams* of *Sacred Truth*, and the *attraction* of *Divine displayed Goodness* communicated from a mind that by *faith* hath *seen the Glory of God*, and by *experience* found that he is *Good*, and that *liveth in the Love of God*: such a one is *fitted* to assist you first in the knowledge of *your selves*, and then in the knowledge of *God in Christ*.

Did you consider what is the *office* of the Ministry, you would soon know what Ministers do most faithfully perform their office, and what kind of Teaching and oversight you should desire: And then you would be reconciled to the Light: and would choose the Teacher (could you have your choice) that would do most to help you to *know your selves*, and *know the Lord*.

I beseech you judge of *our work* by our *Commission*, and judge of it by *your own Necessities*. Have you more need to be acquainted with your *sin and danger*? or to

be pleased with a set of handsome words, which when they are said, do leave you as they found you; and leave no *Light* and *Life* and heavenly *Love* upon your hearts: that have no substance that you can feed upon in the review?

And what our Commission is you may find, in many places of the Scripture, *Ezek.* 3. 18, 19, 20, 21. [*When I say unto the Wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand: Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul: ——— And [If thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned, also thou hast delivered thy soul.]*]

And what if they distaste our doctrine? must we forbear? *Verse 11.* [*Tell them, thus saith the Lord God, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.*] So *Ezek.* 33. 1. to 10.

You know what came of *Jonah* for refusing

fusing to deliver Gods threatenings against Nineve.

Christs stewards must give to each his portion. He himself threatneth damnation to the impenitent, the Hypocrites, and unbelievers, Luke 13. 3. 5. Mark 16. 16. Mat. 24. 51. Paul saith of himself [*If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ*, Gal. 1. 10. Patience and meekness is commanded to the Ministers of Christ, even in the instructing of opposers; But to what end? but [*that they may escape out of the snare of Devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*] So that with all our meekness we must be so plain with you, as to make you know that you are Satans captives, taken alive by him in his snares, till God by giving you Repentance shall recover you, 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26.

The very effice of the Preachers sent by Christ was [*to open mens eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins, and inheritance with the sanctified by faith in Christ,*] Acts 26. 18. which telleth you, that we must let men understand, that till they are converted and sanctified, they are blind, and in the dark, and in the power of Satan, far from God,

unpardoned, and having no part in the inheritance of Saints.

Christ tells the Pharisees, that they were *of their Father the Devil*, when they boasted that *God was their Father*, John 8. 44. And how plainly he tels them of their *hypocrisie*, and asketh them *how they can escape the damnation of Hell*, you may see in *Mat. 23*.

Paul thought it his duty to tell *Elymas*, *Acts 13. 10*. that he *was full of all subtilty and mischief*, *the child of the devil*, and *the enemy of all righteousness*, a *perverter of the right wayes of the Lord*. And *Peter* thought meet to tell *Simon Magus*, that he had neither part, nor lot in that matter; that his heart was not right in the sight of God; that he was in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, *Acts 8. 21. 23*.

The charge of *Paul* to *Timothy* is plain and urgent, *2 Tim. 4. 1, 2*. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his Kingdom, Preach the word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort.*] And to *Titus* chap. 1. 13. *Rebuke them sharply, that they may be found in the faith.*

Judge now whether Ministers must deal plainly or deceitfully with you: and whether

ther it be the *searching healing truth* that they must bring you, or a *smooth tale* that hath no salt or savour in it: And would you have us break these Laws of God, for *nothing* but to *deceive* you, and tell you a *lie*, and make the *ungodly* believe that he is *godly*: or to *hide* the truth that is necessary to your salvation? Is the *Knowledge of your selves* so intolerable a thing to you?

Beloved Hearers, either it is *true* that you are yet un sanctified, or it is *not*: If it be *not*, it is none of our desire you should think so: We do all that we can to *cure* the *mistakes* of troubled Christians, that think themselves *worse* then indeed they are. But if it be *true*, tell me, *Why* would you not know it? I hope it is not because you would not be *remembered* of your *wo*, and so *tormented before the time*. I hope you think not that we delight to vex mens consciences with fear; or to see men live in grief and trouble, rather then in well grounded peace and joy. And if indeed you are yet unregenerate, that is not long of us that tell you of it, but of your selves that wilfully continue it: Do we *make* you *ungodly* by telling you of your ungodliness? Is it we that *hinder* the *forgiveness* of your sins, by letting you know that they are
not

not forgiven? O no! We strive for your conversion to this end that your sins may be forgiven you; and you hinder the forgiveness of them by refusing to be converted. When God forsaketh stubborn souls for resisting his grace, note how he expresseth his severity against them, Mark 4. 12. That seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.] You see here, that till they are converted, mens sins are not forgiven them. And that whoever procureth the forgiveness of their sins, must do it by procuring their Conversion: And that the hindring of their Conversion is the hindering of their forgiveness. And that blindness of mind is the great hinderance of conversion: when men do not perceive the very things which they see, (not knowing the reason and the sense and end of them, but the out-side only:) Nor understand the things which they hear: And therefore undoubtedly the Teacher that brings you a Light into your minds, and first sheweth you your selves, and your unconverted and your unpardoned state, is he that takes the way to your Conversion and forgiveness: As the fore-cited Text sheweth

sheweth you, Acts 18. 26. [*I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light (that they may first know themselves , and then know God in Jesus Christ) and from the power of Satan, (who ruled them as their Prince, and captivated them as their Jaylor) unto God (whom they had forsaken as a Guide and Governour, and were deprived of as their Protector, Portion and felicity ;) that they may receive forgiveness of sins (which none receive but the converted) and an inheritance among them that are sanctified (for Glory is the inheritance of the Saints alone, Col. 1. 12.) (and all this) through faith that is in me (by believing in me, and giving up themselves unto me, that by my Satisfaction, Merits, Teaching, Spirit, Intercession and Judgement, it may be accomplished.)*

Truly Sirs, if we knew how to procure your *conversion* and *forgiveness*, without making you know that you are *unconverted* & *unpardoned*, we would do it, & not trouble you needlessly with so sad a discovery. Let that man be accounted a butcher of souls, & not a Phyficion for them, that delighteth to torment them. Let him be accounted unworthy to be a Preacher of the Gospel, that envieth you your peace and comfort. We would

not have you think one jot worse of your condition then it is. Know but the very *truth*, what case you *are in*; and we desire no more.

And so far are we by this from driving you to *Desperation*, that it is your *Desperation* that we would *prevent* by it; which can *no other way be prevented*. When you are past *Remedy*, *Desperation* cannot be avoided: And this is necessary to your *Remedy*: There is a *conditional Despair*, and an *Absolute Despair*: The former is *necessary* to prevent the *latter*, and to bring you to a state of *Hope*. A man that hath the toothache, may perhaps *despair* of being eased *without drawing the tooth*; or a man that hath a *gangrened foot* may *despair* of life, *unless it be cut off*: that so *by the cure*, he may not be left to an *Absolute despair* of life. So you must *despair* of being *pardoned or saved without conversion*, that you may be *converted*, and so have hope of your salvation, and be saved from *final absolute despair*. I hope you will not be offended with him, that would perswade you to *Despair* of living *unless you will eat and drink*. You have no more reason to be offended with him that would have you *despair* of being *pardoned or saved without Christ*, or without his sanctifying Spirit.

Having

HAVING said so much of the Necessity of Ministers endeavouring to make unregenerate sinners *know themselves*, I shall next try what I can do *towards it*, with those that hear me, by proposing these few Questions to your consideration.

Quest. 1. *Do you think that you were ever unsanctified, and in a state of Wrath and condemnation or not? If not, then you are not the off-spring of Adam: you are not then of humane race: For the Scripture telleth you that [We are conceived in sin,]* Psal. 51. 5. *And [That by one man sin entered into the world, and Death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned] and that by the offence of one, judgement came upon all men to condemnation; Rom 5. 12. 18. And that [All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.] Rom. 3. 23. [If we say that we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us, 1 John 1. 8. 10. And the wages of sin is death, Rom. 6. 23.*

And I hope you will confess that you cannot be pardoned and saved without a Saviour; and therefore that as you need a Saviour, so you must have a special interest in

in him. It is as certain that *Christ saveth not at all*, as that he *saveth any*: For the same word assureth us of *the one*, and of *the other*.

Quest. 2. But if you confess that *once you were children of wrath*, my next Question is, *Whether you know how and when you were delivered from so sad a state?* or at least *Whether it be done, or not?* Perhaps you'll say, It was done in your *Baptism*, which washeth away *Original sin*. But granting you that all that have a *Promise of pardon before*, have that promise sealed, and that pardon delivered them by *Baptism*, I ask you.

Quest. 3. Do you think that *Baptism by water only will save*, unless you be also baptized by the spirit? Christ telleth you the contrary with a vehement asseveration, *John 3.5. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*] And Peter tels you that it is [*not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God*, *1 Pet. 2. 21.* If therefore you have not the spirit of Christ, for all your Baptism, you are none of his, *Rom. 8. 9.* For that which is born of the flesh is (but) flesh, and you must be
born

born of the spirit if you will be spiritual,
John 3. 6.

I shall further grant you, that *many* receive the *spirit* of Christ even in their *infancy*, and may be *savingly* as well as *Sacramentally* then *Regenerate*. And if this be your case you have very great cause to be thankfull for it. But I next enquire of you.

Quest. 4. *Have you not lived an unholy carnal life since you came to the use of reason? Have you not since then declared, that you did not live the life of faith, nor walk after the spirit but the flesh? If so, then it is certain that you have need of a Conversion from that ungodly state, what ever Baptism did for you: And theretore you are still to enquire whether you have been converted since you came to age.*

And I must needs remember you, that your *Infant Covenant* made in Baptism, being upon your *parents faith and consent*, and not *your own*, will serve your turn no longer then your *Infancy*, unless when you come to the use of Reason, you *renew and own* that Covenant your selves, and have a *personal faith and Repentance* of your *own*. And whatever you received in *Baptism*, this must be our next enquiry.

Quest.

Quest. 5. *Did you ever since you came to age upon sound Repentance, and renunciation of the flesh, the world and the devil, give up your selves unfeignedly by faith to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; and shew by the performance of this holy Covenant, that you were sincere in the making of it?*

I confess it is a matter so hard to most, to assign the *time* and *manner* of their *Conversion*, that I think it no safe way of trial. And therefore I will issue all in this one Question.

Quest. 6. *Have you the Necessary parts of the New Creature now?* though perhaps you know not just *when* or *how* it was formed in you? The Question is, *Whether you are now in a state of sanctification?* and not, *Whether you can tell just when you did receive it?* He that would know *Whether* he be a *Man*, must not do it by remembering *when* he was born, or *how* he was formed; but by discerning the *Rational nature* in himself at present. And though *Grace* be more observable to us in its *enterance*, then *Nature* (as finding, and entering into, a discerning subject, which Nature doth not;) Yet it beginneth so *early* with some, and so *obscurely* with others, and in others the preparations

preparations are so long or notable, that its hard to say when special grace came in. But you may well discern Whether it be there, or not? and that is the Question that must be resolved, if you would *know your selves.*

And, though I have been long in these exhortations to incline your Wils, I shall be short in giving you those Evidences of the Holy Life, which must be before your eyes while you are upon the trial.

In summ, *If your very hearts do now unfeignedly consent to the Covenant which you made in Baptism, and your Lives express it to be a true Consent, I dare say you are regenerate, though you know not just when you first consented.*

Come on then, and let us enquire what you say to the several parts of your *Baptismal Covenant.*

1. If you are sincere in the Covenant you have made with Christ, *You do resolutely Consent, that God shall be your only God, as reconciled to you by Jesus Christ: Which is, 1. That you will take him for your Owner or your Absolute Lord, and give up your selves to him as his Own.*

2. That *You will take him for your Supreme Governour, and Consent to be subject*

to his Government and Laws; taking his Wisdom for your Guide, and his Will for the Rule of your Wills and Lives.

3. That you will take him for your chiefest Benefactor, from whom you receive and expect all your Happiness, and to whom you owe your selves and all, by way of Thankfulness: And that you take his Love and favour for your Happiness it self, and prefer the Everlasting Enjoyment of his Glorious sight and Love in Heaven, before all the sensual pleasures of the world.

I would prove the necessity of all these by Scripture as we go, but that it is evident in it self; these three Relations being Essential to God as our God in Covenant. He is not our God, if not our Owner, Ruler and Benefactor. You profess all this, when you profess but to Love God, or take him for your God.

2. In the Covenant of Baptism you do profess to believe in Christ, and take him for your only Saviour: If you do this in sincerity, 1. You do unfeignedly Believe the doctrine of his Gospel, and the Articles of the Christian faith, concerning his Person, his Offices, and his suffering and works. 2. You do take him unfeignedly for the only Redeemer and Saviour of mankind, and Give up
your

your selves to be saved by his Merits, Righteousness, Intercession, &c. as he hath promised in his word. 3. You *trust upon him and his promises*, for the attainment of your *Reconciliation and Peace with God*, your *Justification, Adoption, Sanctification*, and the *Glory of the life to come*. 4. You *take him for your Lord and King*, your *Owner and Ruler* by the right of *Redemption*; and your *grand Benefactor*, that hath obliged you to *Love and Gratitude*, by saving you from the wrath to come, and purchasing eternal Glory for you, by his most wonderfull condescension, life and sufferings.

3. In the *Baptismal Covenant*, you are engaged to the *Holy Ghost*. If you are sincere in *this branch* of your *Covenant*, 1. You discern your *sins* as *odious and dangerous*, as the *corruption* of your *souls*, and that which displeaseth the most Holy God. 2. You see an *excellency* in *Holiness* of *Heart and Life*, as the *Image of God*, the *rectitude* of man, and that which fits him for eternal blessedness, and maketh him amiable in the eyes of God. 3. You unfeignedly *desire* to be *rid of your sin*, how dear soever it hath been to you: and to be perfectly sanctified by the *Holy Spirit*, by his de-

grees, in the use of the means which he hath appointed: and you *consent* that the *Holy Ghost* as your sanctifier do *purifie you* and *kindle the Love of God* in you, and bring it to *perfection*.

4. In *Baptism* you profess to *renounce the world, the flesh, and the Devil*: that is, as they stand for your Hearts *against the Will and Love of God*, and against the *Happiness of the unseen world*; and against your *Faith in Christ your Saviour*; and against the *sanctifying work* of the *Holy Ghost*. If therefore you are sincere in *this part of your Covenant*, you do upon deliberation perceive all the *pleasures, profits and honours* of this world to be so vain and worthless, that you are *Habitually resolved*, to prefer the Love and favour of *God*, and your salvation before them; and to be *Ruled by Jesus Christ* and his *Spirit and word*, rather than by the *desires of the flesh*, or the *worlds allurements*, or the will of man, or the suggestions of the devil: and to forsake all rather than forsake the *Father, the Saviour, the Sanctifier* to whom you are devoted, and the everlasting life which upon his promise you have taken for your Hope and Portion. This is the sense of Baptism, and all this in profession being

ing *Essential* to your *Baptism*, must be *Essential* to your *Christianity*: Your *Parents Profession* of it was necessary to your *infant title* to the outward priviledges of the Church: Your own *personal profession* is necessary to your continuance of those priviledges, and your visible *Christianity* and communion with the adult: And the *Truth* of what you *profess*, is necessary to your *reall Christianity before God*, and to your *title to salvation*: And this is it that is to be now enquired after. You cannot hope to be admitted into Heaven, upon lower terms then the sincerity of that profession with entereth you into the Church: While we tell you of no higher matters *necessary to your salvation*, then the *sincerity* of that which is necessary to *Baptism* and *Christianity*, I hope you will not say we deal *too strictly* with you. Enquire now by a diligent tryal of your hearts, whether you *truly consent* to all these articles of your *Baptismal Vow or Covenant*. If you *do*, you are *Regenerate* by the *Spirit*: If you *do not*, you have but the *Sacrament* of Regeneration: which aggravateth your guilt, as a violated profession and Covenant must needs do. And I do not think, that any man worthy to be dis-

coursed with, will have the face to tell you that any man at the use of Reason, is by his Baptism, (or any thing else) in a state of Justification and Salvation, *whose heart doth not sincerely consent to the Covenant of Baptism, and whose Life expresseth not that consent.*

Hence therefore you may perceive that it is a thing unquestionable, that all these persons are yet unregenerate and in the bond of their iniquity.

1. All those that have not unfeignedly devoted themselves to God, as being not their own but his. His by the title of Creation, Psal. 100. 3. [*Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we our selves, We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*] And His by the title of Redemption: for we are bought with a price, 1 Cor. 7. 23. And he that unfeignedly taketh God for his Owner, and Absolute Lord, will heartily give up himself unto him; as Paul saith of the Corinthians, 2 Cor. 8. 5. *They first gave up their own selves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God.*]

And he that entirely giveth up himself to God, doth with himself surrender all that he hath in desire and resolution. As
Christ

Christ with himself doth give us all things, Rom. 8. 32. and addeth other things to them that seek first his Kingdom and its Righteousness, Matth. 6. 33. to Christians with themselves do give up all they have to Christ.

And he that giveth up himself to God, will live to God: And he that taketh not himself to be his Own, will take nothing for his Own: but will study the interest of his Lord, and think he is best disposed of when he honoureth him most, and serveth him best, 1 Cor. 6. 19. 20. [Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorifie God in your body, and in your spirit, which are Gods.

If any of you devote not your selves unfeignedly to God, and make it not your first enquiry, what God would have you be and do, but live to your selves, and yet think your selves in a state of Life, you are mistaken, and do not know your selves. What abundance might easily see their miserable condition in this discovery! Who say in effect [our lips are our own: Who is Lord over us? Psal. 12. 4.] and rather hate and oppose the interest of God and Holiness in the world, then devote themselves to the promoting of it! Deut. 32. 6. [Do ye

thus requite the Lord, ye foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee?]

2. All those are unregenerate and in a state of death, that *are not sincerely subjected to the Governing will of God*, but are *Ruled by their carnal Interest and desires*; and the word of a *man* that can gratifie or hurt them, can do more with them then the word of *God*: To shew them the command of a *man* that they think, can *undo* them if they disobey, doth more prevail with them then to shew them the *command of God* that can condemn them unto endless misery: They more *fear* men that *can kill the body*, then *God that can destroy both soul and body in Hell fire*. When the *lust of the flesh*, and the *will of man*, do bear more *sway* then the *will of God*, its certain that such a soul is *unregenerate*, Rom. 6. 3, 4, 6. *Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? therefore we are buried with him by Baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life* ——— *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that hence-*
forth

forth we should not serve sin, ——— v. 16.
 Know ye not that to whom you yield your
 selves servants to obey, his servants ye are to
 whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death,
 or of obedience unto righteousness?

1 Pet. 4. 4. 1, 2. Forasmuch then as Christ
 hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm your
 selves likewise with the same mind: for he that
 hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin:
 that he no longer should live the rest of his
 time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to
 the will of God.]

3. All those are unregenerate, that depend
 not upon God as their chiefest Benefactor:
 and do not most carefully apply themselves
 to him, as knowing that in his favour is
 life, Psal. 30. 5. and that his loving kind-
 ness is better then life,] Psal. 63. 3. and
 that to his judgement we must finally stand
 or fall: but do ambitiously seek the favour
 of men, and call them their Benefactors,
 (Luke 22. 25. Matth. 23. 9.) whatever
 become of the favour of God. He is no
 child of God that preferreth not the Love of
 God before the Love of all the world. He is
 no heir of heaven, that preferreth not the
 fruition of God in Heaven, before all world-
 ly glory and felicity, Col. 4. 1, 2, 3. If ye
 be risen with Christ, seek the things that are
 above

above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.] The Love of God is the summ of Holiness; the Heart of the new creature; the perfecting of it is the perfection and felicity of man.

4. They are certainly *unregenerate* that *Believe not the Gospel, and take not Christ for their only Saviour, and his promises of Grace and Glory as purchased by his Sacrifice and Merits, for the Foundation of their hopes, on which they resolve to trust their souls for pardon and for peace with God, and endless Happiness, Acts 4. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.] 1 John 5. 11, 12. This is the record that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life.]*

When our Happiness was in *Adams* hands, he lost it: It is now put into safer hands, and *Jesus Christ* the second *Adam* is become our *Treasury*. He is the *Head of the Body*, from whom each member hath quickning influence, *Eph. 1. 22. The life of Saints is in him, as the life of the tree is in the root, unseen, Col. 4. 3, 4. Holiness is a*
Living

Living unto God in Christ ; Though we are dead with Christ, to the Law, and to the world, and to the flesh, we are alive to God. So Paul describeth our case in his own, Gal. 2. 19, 20. I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God : I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live : yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me,] Rom. 6. 11. Likewise reckon ye also your selves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.] Christ is the Vine, and we are the branches : without him we can do nothing : If you abide not in him, and his words in you, you are cast forth as a branch, and withered, which men gather and cast into the fire, and they are burnt,] John 15. 1, 5, 6, 7. In Baptism you are married unto Christ, as to the external solemnization ; and in spiritual Regeneration your Hearts do inwardly close with him, entertain him, and resign themselves unto him, by Faith and Love ; and by a resolved Covenant become his own : And therefore Baptism and the Lords Supper are called Sacraments, because as Souldiers were wont by an Oath and listing their names, and other
engaging

engaging Ceremonies to oblige themselves to their Commanders, and their *Vow* was called *A Sacrament*: so do we engage ourselves to Christ in the holy *Vow* or *Covenant* entered in *Baptism*, and renewed in the *Lords Supper*.

5. That person is certainly unregenerate that never was convinced of a *Necessity of Sanctification*, or never perceived an excellency and amiableness in Holiness of heart and life, and loved it in others and desired it himself: and never gave up himself to the Holy Ghost, to be further sanctified in the use of his appointed means; desiring to be perfect, and willing to press forward towards the mark, and to abound in grace. Much less is that person renewed by the *Holy Ghost*, that *hateth Holiness*, and had rather be without it, and would not walk in the fear and obedience of the Lord.

The *Spirit of Holiness* is that *Life* by which Christ quickneth all that are his members. He is no member of Christ that is without it: Rom. 8. 9. According to his *Mercy*, he saveth us by the *washing of Regeneration* and renewing of the *Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5.

6. That person is unregenerate that is under the *Dominion* of his *fleshly desires*, and
mindeth

mindeth the things of the flesh above the things of the Spirit; and hath not mortified it so far, as not to live according to it. A carnal mind, and a carnal life, are opposite to Holiness, as Sicknes is to Health, and Darkness unto Light, Rom. 8. 1. to 14. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. — For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh: but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be: so then they that are in the flesh, cannot please God — For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if by the Spirit ye mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live.] [Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, revellings and such like; of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is Love,

Joy,

Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance: against such there is no Law: And they that are Christs, have crucified the flesh, with the affections, and lusts, Galat. 5. 18. to 25.

7. Lastly, that person is certainly *unregenerate*, that so far *valueth* and *loveth* this world, or any of the carnal accommodations therein, as *practically* to prefer them before the *Love of God*, and the *Hopes of Everlasting Glory*: seeking it first, with highest estimation, and holding it *fastest*; so as that he will rather venture his *soul* upon the threatned wrath of God, then his *body* upon the wrath of man; and will be religious no further then may consist with his prosperity or safety in the world, and hath something that he cannot part with for Christ and heaven, because it is dearer to him then they: Let this man go never so far in Religion, as long as he goeth further for the world, and setteth it nearest to his heart, and holds it *fastest*, and will do most for it, and consequently loveth it better then Christ, he is no true Christian, nor in a state of grace.

The Scriptures put this also out of doubt; as you may see, Mat. 10. 37, 38. & Luke 14. 26,

14. 26, 27, 33. He that loveth Father or Mother more then me, is not worthy of me, &c. Whosoever doth not bear his Cross and come after me, cannot be my Disciple. Whoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple. Know ye not that the friendship of the world, is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God, Jam. 4. 4. No wonder then if the world must be renounced in our Baptism. [Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, 1 John 2. 15.

You see by this time, what it is to be Regenerate, and to be a Christian indeed, by what is contained even in our Baptism: and consequently how you may Know your selves, whether you are sanctified, and the heirs of heaven, or not.

Again therefore I summon you to appear before your consciences: and if indeed these Evidences of regeneration are not in you, stop not the sentence, but confess your sinfull miserable state, and condemn your selves, and say no longer, I hope yet that my present condition may serve turn, and that God will forgive me though I should die

die without any further change : Those *Hopes* that you may be saved without regeneration, or that you *are regenerate* when you *are not*, are the pillars of Satans fortresses in your hearts, and keep you from the *saving Hopes* of the Regenerate, that that will never make you ashamed. Uphold not that which Christ is engaged against : Down it must, either by Grace or Judgement : and therefore abuse not your souls by underpropping such an ill-grounded false deceitfull hope. You have now time to take it down so orderly and safely, as that it fall not on your heads and overwhelm you not for ever. But if you stay till death shall undermine it, the fall will be great, and your ruine irreparable. If you are wise, therefore *Know your selves in time.*

II. **I** have done with that part of my *special Exhortation* which concerned the *unregenerate* : I am next to speak to those of you that by *Grace* are brought into a *better state* : and to tell you, that it very much concerneth *you also*, even the *best* of you to labour to be *well acquainted with your selves* : and that both in respect
of

of 1. *Your sins and wants*, and 2. *Your Graces and your duties*.

I. Be acquainted with the root and remnant of your sins : with your particular inclinations and corrupt affections : with their quality, their degree and strength : with the weaknesses of every grace : with your disability to duty : and with the omissions or sinfull practises of your lives. Search diligently and deeply ; frequently and accurately peruse your hearts and ways, till you certainly and throughly know your selves.

And I beseech you let it not suffice you that you know your states, and have found your selves in the Love of God, in the faith of Christ, and possessed by his Spirit. Though this be a mercy worth many worlds, yet this is not all concerning your selves that you have to know. If yet you say that you have no sin, you deceive your selves. If yet you think you are past all danger, your danger is the greater for this mistake. As much as you have been hambled for sin : as much as you have loathed it, and your selves for it : as oft as you have confessed it, lamented it, and complained and prayed against it, yet it is alive : Though it be mortified, it is alive. It is said to be mortified

as to the prevalency and reign, but the *re-
liets* of it yet *survive* : were it perfectly
dead, you were perfectly delivered from it,
and might say *you have no sin* : but it is not
yet so happy with you. It will find work
for the *blood and spirit* of Christ, and for *your
selves*, as long as you are in the flesh. And
alas, too many that know themselves to be
upright in the *main*, are yet so much unac-
quainted with their hearts and lives as to
the *degrees* of *grace* and *sin*, as that it much
disadvantageth them in their Christian pro-
gress. Go along with me in the carefull
observation of these following Evils, that
may befall even the regenerate by the *rem-
nants of self-ignorance*.

I. *The work of Mortification is very
much hindered, because you know your selves
no better* : as may appear in all these fol-
lowing discoveries.

I. You *confess not sin to God or man* so
penitently and *sensibly* as you ought, because
you *know your selves* no better. Did you
see your inside with a fuller view, how
deeply would you aggravate your sin? How
heavily would you charge your selves? Re-
pentance would be more intense and more
effectual: and when you were more contrite,
you would be more meet for the sense of
pardon,

pardon, and for Gods delight, *Isa.* 51. 15. & 66. 2. It would fill you more with godly shame and self-abhorrence, if you better knew your selves. It would make you more sensibly say with *Paul*, *Rom.* 7. 23, 24. [*I see another Law in my members warring against the Law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the Law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!*] And with *David*, *Psal.* 38. 18. *I will declare my iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin,* & 40. 12. *They are more then the hairs of my head,* & 32. 5. *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*] Repentance is the Death of sin: and the knowledge of our selves, and the sight of our sins, is the life of Repentance.

2. You pray not against sin, for grace and pardon so earnestly as you should, because you know your selves no better. O that God would but open these too-close hearts unto us, and anatomize the reliëts of the old man, and shew us all the recesses of our self-deceit, and the filth of worldliness, and carnal inclinations that lurk within us, and read us a Lecture upon every

part; what prayers would it teach us to indite ! That you be not proud of your holiness, let me tell you Christians, that a full display of the corruptions that the best of you carry about you, would not only take down self-exalting thoughts, that you be not lift up above measure, but would teach you to pray with fervour and importunity, and waken you out of your sleepy indifferency, and make you cry, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me !* If the sight of a *Lazar* or cripple or naked person move you to compassion, though they use no words : if the sight of a man that is gasping for want of your relief, will affect you : surely the sight of your *own deformities, wants and dangers* would affect you if you saw them as they are. How many a sin do you forget in your *Confessions* that should have a *particular Repentance* ? and how many *wants* do you overlook in *prayers*, that should have *particular petitions* for a mercifull supply ? And how many are *lightly touched*, and run over with words of course, that would be *earnestly insisted on*, if you did but *better know your selves* ! O that God would persuade you better to *study your hearts*, and *pray out of that Book* when ever you draw nigh him : that you not might be so like

like the Hypocrites, that *draw near to him with the lips*, when *their hearts are far from him*. To my shame I must confess that my soul is too dry and barren in holy supplications to God, and too little affected with my confessed sins and wants: but I am forced to lay all in a very great measure upon the imperfect acquaintance that I have at home: I cannot think I should *want matter* to pour out before the Lord in confession and petition, nor so much *want fervour and earnestness* with God, if my Heart and life lay open to my view, while I am upon my knees.

3. It is for want of a *fuller knowledge of your selves* that you are so negligent in your *Christian watch*, that you do no better *guard your senses*; that you make no stricter a Covenant with your *eyes*, your *appetites*, your *tongues*: that you no more examine what you *think*, *affect* and *say*: what *passeth into your heart or out of it*: that you call not *your selves* more frequently to *account*; but *dayes run on*, and *duties* are carelessly performed as of course, and no daily or weekly reckoning made to conscience of all. The knowledge of your *weaknesses*, and *readiness to yield*, and of your *treacherous corruptions* that comply

with the enemy, would make you more suspicious of your selves, and to walk more *circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise*, Eph. 5. 15. and to look under your feet, and *consider your wayes* before you were too bold and venturous. It was the consciousness of their own infirmity, that should have moved the disciples to *watch and pray*, Mat. 26. 41. [*Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*] And *all* have the same charge, because *all* have the same infirmity and danger, [*What I say to you, I say unto all, Watch,*] Mar. 13. 37. Did we better *know* how many advantages our own corruptions give the Tempter, that charge of the Holy Ghost would awake us all to stand to our arms and look about us: 1 Cor. 16. 13: *Watch ye, stand fast in the faith: quit you like men, be strong:*] And Ephes. 6. 11, 12, 13, 14. *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, &c.*] When men know not whose legs they stand upon, they grow heedless of their way, and quickly slide.

The

The *knowledge of our selves* doth shew us all the *advantages* of the tempter: what he hath to work upon, and what in us to take his part, and consequently where he is likeliest to assault us: and so puts us into so prepared a posture for defence, as very much hindereth his success. But so far as we do *not know our selves*, we are like blind men in sensing, that the adversary may hit in what part he please: we have so many *hidden enemies* in our *houses*, as will quickly open the door to more. What sin may not Satan tempt a man into, that is not acquainted with the corruptions and frailties of his *own heart*?

4. It is for want of *Self-acquaintance* that we make not *out for help against our sin to Ministers* or other friends that could assist us: And that we use the *confirming Ordinances* with no more care and diligence. All the abilities and willingness of others, and all the helps of Gods appointment, will be neglected, when we should employ them against our sins, so far as self-ignorance doth keep us from discerning the necessity of them.

5. It is for want of a fuller *knowledge of our selves*, that *many lie long in sins unobserved by themselves*: and many are on the

284 *the necessity of being ignorant,*
declining hand, and take no notice of it. And how little *resistance* or mortifying endeavours we are like to bestow upon *unknown* or *unobserved* sins, is easie to conceive. How many may we observe to have notable blemishes of Pride, ostentation, desire of preheminance and esteem; envy, malice, self-conceitedness, self-seeking, censoriousness, uncharitableness, and such like, that see no more of it in themselves, then is in more mortified men? How ordinarily do we hear the Pastors that watch over them, and their friends that are best acquainted with them, lamenting the miscarriages, and the careless walking and declining of many that seem Religious, when they lament it not themselves, nor will not be convinced that they are sick of any such disease, any more then all other Christians are? Hence comes the stiffness of too many such, against all that can be said to humble and reform them: and that they are so impatient of reproof, and think reprovers do them wrong: and its well if it abate not Christian love, and procure not some degree of hatred or displeasure. Like a man that is entering into a consumption, and takes it for an injury to be told so, till his languishing and decay convince him.

Hence

Hence it is that we have all need to lament in general our unknown sins, and say with David [*Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.*] Psalm 19. 12. Hence it is that we can seldom tell men of the most discernable faults, but they meet us with excuses, and justify themselves.

There are few of us I think, that observe our hearts at all, but find both upon any *special illumination*, and in the hour of *discovering tryals*, that there were many distempers in our *hearts*, and many miscarriages in our *lives*, that we never took notice of before. The Heart hath such secret corners of uncleanness, such mysteries of iniquity, and depths of deceitfulness, that many fearing God, are strangely unacquainted with themselves, as to the particular motions and degrees of sin, till some *notable providence*, or *gracious light* assist them in the discovery. I think it not unprofitable here to give you some instances, of sin undiscerned by the servants of the Lord themselves that have it, till the light come in that makes them wonder at their former darkness.

In *General* first observe these two. 1. The *secret Habits* of sin, being discernable only by

by some acts, are many times unknown to us, because we are under no *strong temptation* to commit those sins. And its a wonderfull hard thing for a man that hath little or no *temptation*, to *know himself*, and know what he should do, if he had the temptations of other men. And O what sad discoveries are made in the *hour of temptation*? What swarms of vice break out in some, like vermin that lay hid in the cold of Winter, and crawl about when they feel the Summers heat! What horrid corruptions which we never observed in our selves before, do shew themselves in the hour of *temptation*! Who would have thought that *Righteous Noah* had in the *Ark* had such a heart, as would by carelesness fall into the sin of *drunkenness*? or that *righteous Lot* had carried from *Sodom* the seed of drunkenness and incest in him? or that *David*, a man so eminent in holiness, and a *man after Gods own heart*, had a heart that had in it the seeds of *Adultery* and *Murder*? Little thought *Peter*, when he professed Christ, *Mat. 16. 16.* that there had been in him such carnality and unbelief, as would have so soon provoked Christ to say, *Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest*

rest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men, ver. 22. 23. And little did he think when he so vehemently professed his resolution rather to die with Christ then deny him, that there had been then in his heart the seed that would bring forth this bitter fruit, *Mat. 26. 74, 75.* Who knows whats *virtually* in a *seed*, that never saw the tree, or tasted of the fruit?

Especially when we have not only a *freedom* from *temptations*, but also the most *powerful means* to keep under *vitious habits*, its hard to know *how far* they are *mortified* at the *root*. When men are among those that countenance the contrary vertue, and where the vice is in disgrace, and where examples of piety and temperance are still before their eyes: If they dwell in such places and company, where *Authority* and *Friendship* and *Reason* do all take part with *good*, and cry down the *evil*, no wonder if the evil that is *unmortified* in mens hearts, do not much break out to their own or others observations through all this opposition. The instance of King *Joash* is famous for this: who *did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, all the dayes of Jehojada the Priest that instructed him, 2 Kings 12. 2.* but after his death, when the
Princes

*Princes of Juda flattered him with their
obeyſance, he left the houſe of God and ſer-
ved Idols, till wrath came upon the land:
and was ſo hardened in ſin, as to murder
Zechariah the Prophet of God, and ſon
of that Jehojada that had brought him out
of obſcurity, and ſet him upon the Throne,
even becauſe he ſpake in the name of the
Lord againſt his ſin; 2 Chron. 24. 20,
21, 22.*

Who would have thought that it had
been in the heart of Solomon, a man ſo
Wiſe, ſo Holy, and ſo Solemnly engaged
to God, by his publick profeſſions and works,
to have committed the abominations men-
tioned, 1 Kings 11. 4.?

If you ſay, that all this proveth not that
there was any ſeed or root of ſuch a ſin in the
Heart before: but only that the temptation
did prevail to cauſe the acts firſt, and then
ſuch habits as thoſe acts did tend to; I an-
ſwer; 1. I grant that temptations do not
only diſcover what is in the heart, but alſo
make it worſe when they prevail; and that
is no full proof that a man had a pro-
per habit of ſin before, becauſe by temptati-
on he commits the act: For Adam ſinned
by temptation without an antecedent ha-
bit. 2. But we know the nature of man to
be

be now corrupted; and that this corruption is *virtually* or *seminally* all sin, disposing us to all; and that this disposition is strong enough to be called a *General Habit*. When *Grace* in the sanctified is called [*A Nature*] 2 Pet. 1. 4. there is the same reason to call the *sinfull inclination* [*a Nature*] too; which can signifie nothing else then a *strong and rooted inclination*. Knowing therefore that the *Heart* is so corrupted, we may well say when the evil fruit appears, that there was the seed of it before. And the easie and frequent yielding to the temptation, shews there was a friend to sin within. 3. But if it were not so, yet that our *hearts* should be so *frail*, so *defectible*, *mutable*, and easily *drawn* to sin, is a part of *Self-knowledge* necessary to our preservation, and not to be disregarded. 4. I am sure Christ himself tells us, that *out of the heart proceed* the sins of the life, *Mat. 15. 19.* and that the *evil things* of *evil men* come out of the *evil treasure* of their *hearts*; *Mat. 12. 36.* And when God permitted the fall of good King *Hezekiah*, the text saith [*God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart*, 2 Chron. 32. 31. that is, that he might shew all that was in his heart, so that the weakness and the remaining

maining corruption of *Hezekiahs* heart were shewn in the sin which he committed.

2. And as the sinful *Inclinations* are hardly discerned, and long lie hid till some *Temptation* draw them out; so the *Act* itself is hardly discerned in any of its malignity, till it be *done and past*, and the soul is brought to a deliberate review. For while a man is *in the act of sin*, either his *understanding* is so far deluded, as to think it *no sin* in its kind, or none to him that then committeth it, or that its better venture on it then not, for the attaining of some seeming good, or the avoiding of some evil: or else the *restraining act* of the understanding is *suspended*, and withdrawn; and it discerneth not practically the pernicious evil of the sin, and *forbiddeth not* the committing of it, or forbids it so *remissly* and with so low a voice, as is drowned by the clamour of *contradicting passion*: so that the prohibition is not heard. And how can it be then expected, that when a man hath not wit enough in use, to *see his sin* so far as to *forbear* it, he should even then *see it* so far as rightly to judge of himself and it? and that when Reason is low, and sensuality prevaileth, we should then

then have the right use of Reason for self-discerning? When a storm of passion hath blown out the Light, and error hath extinguished it, we are unlikely then to know our selves. When the *sensual part* is pleasing it self with its forbidden objects, that *pleasure* so corrupts the judgement, that men will *easily believe* that it is *lawfull*, or that it is *not very bad*: So that sin is usually *least known* and *felt*, when it is *greatest* and *in exercise*, and one would think should then be *most perceptible*. Like a *phrensie* or *madness*, or other *deliration*, that is *least known* when it is *greatest* and *most in act*, because its *nature* is destructive to the *Reason* that should *know* it: Like a spot in the eye, that is it self unseen, and hindereth the sight of all things else. Or as the deeper a mans sleep is, the less he knoweth that he is a sleep. *Somnium narrare vigilantis est*, saith *Seneca*. Its men awake that tell their dreams.

And thus you see that through *self-ignorance* it comes to pass, that both *secret Habits*, and the most *open acts* of sin are oft-times little known. A man that is *drunk*, is in an unfit state to know *what drunkenness is*: and so is a man that is in his *passion*: You will hardly bring him to repentance

repentance till it be *allaid*: And so is a man in the brutifying heat of *lust*: or in the childish use of such *recreations* as he doteth on: or in the ambitious pursuit of his deluding honours: And therefore abundance of *unknown sin*, may remain in a soul that laboureth not to be *well acquainted with it self*.

And as I have shewed you this in *General*, both of *Habits* and *Acts* of sin, let us consider of some *Instances* in *particular*, which will yet more discover the necessity of *studying our selves*.

1. Little do we think what *odious and dangerous errors* may befall a person that *now is orthodox*! What a *slippery mutability* the *mind* of man is lyable unto! How variety of *representations* causeth variety of *apprehensions*: Like some pictures that seem one thing when you look on them on one side, and another thing when on another side; If you change your place, or change your light, they *seem* to change. Indeed *Gods word* hath nothing in it thus fitted to deceive: but *our weakness* hath that which disposeth us to *mistakes*: We are like an *unlearned Judge*, that thinks the cause is good which he first hears pleaded for, till he hear the confutation by the other party, and then
he

he thinks the other hath the best cause, till perhaps he hear both so long, till he know not whose cause is the best: The person that now is a *zealous lover* of the *Truth*, (when it hath procured entertainment by the happy advantage of friends, acquaintance, Ministers, Magistrates, or common consent being on its side) may possibly turn a *zealous adversary* to it, when it *loseth* those advantages: when a *Minister* shall change his mind, how *many* of the *flock* may he mislead?

When you *marry* or contract any *intimate friendship* with a person of unsound and dangerous principles, how easily are they received?

When the stream of the *times* and *authority* shall change, and put the name of Truth on falshood, how many may be carried down the stream?

How zealous have many been for a *faithfull Ministry*, that have turned their *persecutors*, or made it a great part of their Religion to revile them, when once they have turned to some *Sect* that is possess'd by the malicious spirit! (especially the Papists and Quakers are famous for such language of reproach: though the former excell the later much in the *slandering part*, and the later
u
excell

excell in the open *bawling* and *incivility* of speech.)

And O that we could stop *here*, and could not remember you how faithfully and honestly some have seemed to love and obey the *word of God*, and to delight in the *Communion of Saints*, that by seducers have been brought to deny the *divine authority of the Scriptures*, and to turn their backs on all *Gods publick Ordinances of Worship*, and excommunicate themselves from the *Society of the Saints*, and vilifie or deny the works of the spirit in them ! Little did these men once think themselves, whither they should fall, under the conceit of rising higher : And little would they have believed him that had told them, what a change they would make. Had these men *known themselves* in time, and known what *Tinder and Gunpowder* was in their hearts, they would have walkt more warily, and its like have scapt the snare : but they *fell into it*, because they *feared it not*. And they *feared it not*, because they *knew not or observed not*, how prone they were to be infected.

-2. Little do many think in their *adversity*, or *low estate*, what *seeds* are in their hearts, which *Prosperity* would turn into very

ry odious, scandalous sins, unless their vigilancy, and a special preservation do prevent it. Many a man that in his shop, or at his plough, is censuring the great miscarriages of his Superiors, doth little think how bad he might prove, if he were in the place of those he censureth. Many a *poor* man that freely talks against the Luxury, Pride and Cruelty of the *Rich*, doth little think how *like them* he should be, if he had *their temptations* and *estates*. How many persons that lived in good repute for humility, temperance and piety, have we seen turn proud, and sensual and ungodly, when they have been exalted! I would mention no mans case by way of insulting or reproach: but by way of compassion, and in order to their repentance that survive, I must say that this *age* hath given us such lamentable instances as should make all our hearts to ake and fear, when we consider the *crimes* and *their effects*. Would the persons that once walk't with us in the wayes of Peace and Concord, and Obedience, have believed that man that should have fore-told them twenty years ago, how many should be puffed up and deluded by *successes*, and make themselves believe by the ebullition of pride,

that *Victories* authorised them to deny subjection to the higher powers, and by right or wrong to take down all that stood in their way, and to take the Government into their own hands, and to depose their rightfull Governours? never once vouchsafing to ask themselves the question that Christ asked, Luke 12. 14. [*Man, who made me a Judge, or a divider over you?*] as if authority had been nothing but strength, and he had the best right to Govern that could make the greatest force to compell obedience. Little were the seeds of all this evil, discerned in the heart, before prosperity and success did cherish them and bring them to that which with grief we have long observed. They would have said as *Hazael*, *Am I a dog that I should do this?* if one had told them before, that when God hath charged every soul to be subject on pain of condemnation, and they had vowed fidelity, they should break all these bonds of commands and vows, and all because they were able to do it: When they would not justify him that should do any mischief to themselves, and think it warrantable, because he was able: when the Ministers of the Gospel, and their dearest friends bore witness against the sin, the heart could

not

not by all this be brought to perceive its guilt; or that it was any sin to *overturn, overturn, overturn*, till they had *overturned all*, and left not *themselves* a bough to stand upon: And how hardly to this *day*, do the *notable discoverings* of God, and the *plainness* of his word, and the continued *witness* of his *servants*, prevail for kindly true Repentance! The unrighteous usage of *Magistracy* and *Ministry*, and the licentious indulgence of the open enemies and revilers of both, and of all the Ordinances and Churches of the Lord, do proclaim aloud to all that that fear God [*The depths and deceits of the heart are wonderfull, and you little think what an hour of temptation may discover in you, or bring you to: oh therefore know your selves, and fear, and watch.*]

3. A man that in *adversity* is touched with *penitent* and *mortifying* considerations, and *strongly resolveth*, how holily and diligently he will live hereafter, if he be recovered or delivered from his suffering, doth oftentimes little think what a *treacherous heart* he hath, and how little he may retain of all this sense of sin or duty, when he is *delivered*, and that he will be so much worse then he seemed or promised, as that

he may have cause to wish he had been *afflicted still*. O how many sick-bed promises are as pious as we can desire, that wither away and come to almost nothing, when health hath scattered the fears that caused them! How many with that great imprisoned Lord, do, as it were, write the story of Christ upon their prison walls, that forget him when they are set liberty! How many are *tender-conscienced* in a *low estate*, that when they are *exalted*, and converse with *great ones*, do think that they may waste their time in idleness and needlessness, scandalous recreations, and be silent witnesses of the most odious sins from day to day; and *pray God be mercifull to them* when *they go to the house of Rimmon*: and dare scarcely own a down-right servant, or hated and reproached cause of God! O what a preservat^{ive} would it be to us in prosperity, to know the corruption of our hearts, and foresee in adversity what we are in danger of! We should then be less ambitious to place our dwellings on the *highest ground*; and more fearfull of the storms that *there* must be expected. How few are there (to a wonder) that *grow better* by worldly greatness and prosperity? Yea how few that *hold their own*, and grow
not

not worse? And yet how few are there (to a greater wonder) that *refuse*, or that *desire not* this perilous station, rather than to stand safer on the lower ground! Verily, the lamentable fruits of prosperity, and the mutability of men that make great professions and promises in adversity, should make the best of us jealous of our hearts, and convince us that there is greater corruption in them, than most are acquainted with, that are never put to such a trial. The height of prosperity shews what the man is indeed, as much as the depth of adversity.

Would one have thought that had read of *Hezekiah's* earnest prayer in his *sickness*, and the *Miracle* wrought to signify his deliverance (2 Kings 20. 2, 3, 9.) and of his written song of praise, *Isa. 38.* that yet *Hezekiah's* heart should ~~be~~ deceive him, as to prove *unthankful*? You may see by his expressions his high *resolutions* to spend his life in the praise of God, *Isa. 38. 19, 20.* [*The living, the living he shall praise thee, as I do this day: The Fathers to the children shall make known thy truth. The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord!*] Would

you think that a *Holy man*, thus rapt up in Gods praise, should yet miscarry, and be charged with *ingratitude*? And yet in *2 Chron. 32. 25.* it is said of him [*But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him: for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem.*] And God was faine to bring him to a review, and humble him for being thus lifted up: as the next words shew, ver. 26. *Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart.*] O Sirs, what Christian that ever was in a deep affliction, and hath been recovered by the tender hand of mercy, hath not found how false a thing the heart is, and how little to be trusted in its best resolutions, and most confident promises! *Hezekiah* still remained a holy faithfull man: but yet thus failed in particulars and degrees. Which of us can say, who have had the most affecting and engaging deliverances, that ever our hearts did fully answer the purposes and promises of our afflicted state! and that we had as constant sensible thanksgivings after, as our complaints and prayers were before! Not I; with grief I must say, Not I, though God hath tryed me many a time. Alas we are too like the deceitful

ceitfull Israelites, Psal. 78. 34. *When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and enquired early after God: and they remembred that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lyed unto him with their tongues: For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant. Prosperity oft shews more of the hypocrisie of the unsound, and the infirmity of the upright, then appeared in adversity. When we feel the strong resolutions of our hearts to cast off our sin, to walk more thankfully and fruitfully and accurately with God then we have done, we can hardly believe that ever those hearts shoul lose so much of those affections and resolutions as in a little time we find they do. Alas how quickly and insensibly do we slide into our former insensibility, and into our dull and heavy fruitless course, when once the pain and fear is gone! And then when the next affliction comes, we are confounded and covered with shame, and have not the confidence with God in our prayers and cries as we had before, because we are conscious of our covenant-breaking and back-sliding: and at last we grow so distrustfull*
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of our hearts , that we know not how to believe *any promises* which they make , nor how to be confident of *any Evidence* of grace that is in them and so we lose the comfort of our sincerity, and are cast into a state of *too much heaviness* and unthankfull denial of our dearest mercies : And all this comes from the foul unexpected relapses and coolings and declinings of the heart that comes not up to the promises we made to God in our distress.

But if *Exaltation* be added to *Deliverance*, how often doth it make the Reason drunk, so that the man seems not the same ! If you see them drowned in Ambition or worldly cares or pleasures ; if you see how boldly they can play with the sin that once they would have trembled at ; how powerfull fleshly arguments are with them ; how strangely they now look at plainhearted, zealous , heavenly Christians, whose case they once desired to be in ; and how much they are ashamed or afraid, to appear openly for an opposed cause of Christ , or openly to justify the persons that he justifieth : As if they had forgot that a day is coming when they will be loth that Christ should be *ashamed of them*, and refuse to *justify them*,

them, when the grand *Accuser* is pleading for their *condemnation*. I say, if you see these men in their prosperity, would you not ask with wonder, Are these the men that lately in distress, did seem so humble, penitent and sincere? that seemed so much above these vanities, that could speak with so much contempt of all the glory and pleasures of the world: and with so much pitty of those vertiginous men, that they now admire.

O what pillars have been shaken by prosperity? what promises broken? what sad eruptions of Pride and worldliness? What openings and sad discoveries of heart, doth this alluring charming tryal make! And why is it that men *know not themselves* when they are *exalted*, but because they did not sufficiently *know themselves*, when they were *brought low*, nor suspected enough the purposes and promises of their hearts, in the day of their distress!

4. We would little think, when the *Heart* is *warmed* and *raised* even to *Heaven*, in holy Ordinances, how *cold* it will grow again, and how *low* it will *fall* down? And when we have attained the clearest sight of our *sincerity*, we little think how quickly all such
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apprehensions may be lost: and the misjudging soul, that reckons upon nothing but what it sees, or feels at present, may be at as great a loss, as if it had never perceived any fruits of the spirit, or lineaments of the Image of God upon it self. How *confident* upon good grounds is many an honest heart of its *sincerity*? How certain that it *desireth to be perfectly Holy*? 1. That it *would be rid of the nearest dearest sin*. 2. That it *loves the Saints*, 3. That it *loves the light of the most searching Ministry*. 4. And *loveth the most practical sanctifying truths*. 5. And *loves the Ministry and means that have the greatest and most powerfull tendency to make themselves more holy* (all which are certain evidences of sincerity.) How *clearly* may the *Heart* perceive *all these*; and write them down; and yet ere long have lost the sight and sense of them all, and find it self in darkness and confusion, and perhaps be perswaded that all is contrary with them! And when they read in their *Diary*, or *Book of Heart-accounts*, that at such a day in examination they found such or such an Evidence, and such a one at another, and many at a third, yet now they may be questioning whether all this were not deceit, because it seems

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contrary to their *present sight and feeling* ! For it is *present light* that the mind discerneth by, and not by that which is *past and gone*, and of which we cannot so easily judge by looking back. They find in their Accounts, At such a time I had my soul enlarged in prayer ; and at such a time I was full of Joy, and at another time I had strong assurance, and boldness with God, and confidence of his love in Christ, and doubted not of the pardon of all my sins, or the Justification or acceptance of my person : But *now*, no Joy, no Assurance, no boldness, or confidence, or sense of Love and pardon doth appear ; but the soul seemeth dead and carnal and unrenewed : As the same trees that in Summer are beautified with pleasant fruits and flowers, in Winter are deprived of their natural ornaments, and seem as dead, when the life is retired to the root. The soul that once would have defied the Accuser, if he had told him that he did *not Love the brethren, nor Love the sanctifying word and means, nor desire to be Holy*, and to be free from sin, is now as ready to *believe the accusation*, and will sooner believe the tempter, than the Minister that watcheth for them as one that must give account : Yea now
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it will turn the *Accuser* of it self, and say as Satan, and falsly charge it self with that which Christ will acquit it of. (And must Christ be put to *Justifie* us against *our selves*, as well as against *Satan*?) The same work that a well composed believer hath in confuting the calumnies of Satan, the same hath a Minister to do in confuting the false accusations of disturbed souls against themselves. And how subtile ! how obstinate and tenacious are they ! as if they had learned some of the *Accusers* art ; such as the *uncharitable* and *malicious* are, against *their neighbours*, in picking quarrels with all that they say or do, in putting the worst construction upon all, in taking every thing in the most uncharitable sense, in aggravating the evil, & extenuating the good, in *faining* things against them that they are not guilty of, and denying or hiding all that is commendable ; just such are poor disquieted souls against themselves : so unjust, and so censorious, as that if they dealt as ill by *others*, they would have the more cause for *some* of these accusations of *themselves*.

And there is not a soul so high in joy and sweet assurance, but is lyable to fall as low as this. And it makes our case to be much more grievous then otherwise it would be,

be, because we know not our selves in the hour of our *Consolations*, and think not how apt we are to lose all our joy, and what seeds of doubts and fears and grief are still within us, and what cause we have to expect a change. And therefore when so sad a change befalleth us, so contrary to our expectations, it surprizeth us with terror, and casteth the poor soul almost into despair. Then cryeth the distressed sinner, [*Did I ever think to see this day! Are my hopes and comforts come to this! Did I think so long that I was a child of God, and must I now perceive that he disowneth me! Did I draw near him as as my Father, and place my hope in his relief! and now must my mouth be stopt with unbelief, and must I look at him afar off, and pass by the doors of mercy with despair! Is all my sweet familiarity with the godly, and all my comfortable hours under the precious means of grace, now come to this?*] O how the poor soul here calls it self [*O vile apostate, miserable sinner! O that I had never lived to see this gloomy day! It had been better for me never to have known the way of righteousness, then thus to have relapsed; and have all the prayers that I have put up, and all the Sermons I have heard*

heard, and the books that I have read, to aggravate my sin and misery.] O how many a poor Christian in this dark mis-judging case, is ready with Job, to curse the day that he was born, and to say of it, *Let it be darkness, let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it: Let it not be joyned to the dayes of the year: let it not come into the number of the moneths:— Because it shut not up the doors of the womb, and hid not sorrow from mine eyes. Why dyed I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me, or why the breasts that I should suck? For now should I have lain still and been quiet — Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery and life unto the bitter in soul: which long for death, and it cometh not — which rejoyce exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the grave. Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in!* Job 3. Such are the lamentations of distressed souls that lately were as in the arms of Christ. Their lives are a burden to them; their food is bitter to them: their health is a sickness to them: their liberty is as a prison to them; their dearest relations are become as strangers; and all their

their comforts are turned into sorrows; and the world seems to them as a howling wilderness; and themselves as desolate forsaken souls. They are still as upon the Cross, and will own no titles, but *Vile, unworthy, lost, undone, forlorn and desolate*; As if they had learnt no words from Christ, but [*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!*

And much of this comes from the *Ignorance of our selves* in the time of *Peace and Consolation*. We are as *David*, Psal. 30. 6, 7. that saith [*In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved: Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: But thou hidest thy face and I was troubled.*] One frown of God, or withdrawing the light of his countenance from us, would quickly turn our day into night, and cover us with sack-cloth, and lay us in the dust.

Take warning therefore dear Christians, you that are yet in the Sun-shine of mercy, and were never at so sad a loss, nor put to groap in the darkness of mistake and terror. No man is so well in health, but must reckon on it that he *may be sick*. When you feel nothing but peace and quietness of mind, expect a stormy night

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of fears, that may disquiet you: When you are feasting upon the sweet entertainments of your Fathers Love, consider that feasting is not like to be your ordinary dyet, but harder fare must be expected. Look on poor Christians in spiritual distress with compassion: hear their sad complaints, and the bills for Prayer which they here put up, and joyn in hearty prayer for them, and remember that this may prove your case. If you say, *To what purpose should you know before hand, how subject you are to this falling sickness?* I answer, Not to anticipate, or bring on your sorrows; but if it may be to *prevent* them: or if that may not be, at least to prevent the *extremity* and *terror*, and to be *provided* for such a storm. When you are now in health of body, and not disabled by melancholy or other corruptions of your fantasie, or passion, nor overwhelmed with the troubles of your mind, you have *leisure* calmly to understand the case of such mis-judging and distressed souls: and accordingly you may avoid the things that cause it: and you may be furnished with *right principles*, and with *promises*, and *experiences*, and *recorded evidences* of *grace*; and when comfort is withdrawn, you

you may by such provision understand, that God changeth not, nor breaks his Covenant, nor abates his Love, when your apprehensions change : And that this is no sign of a forsaken soul : and that the ceasing of our feast, and withdrawing of the table is not a turning us out of the family. Expect some sicknesses, and you will the better know the use of the Physicion, and will lay up promises, and prepare your cordials: and this will prove an exceeding ease, when the hour of your tryal comes.

And what I have said of the loss of comfort, may be said also of the diminished and interrupted operations of all grace. We little think in the vigor of our holy progress, what falls and swoonings and languishings we may find. When you have access with boldness in prayer unto God, and lively affections and words at will, and comfortable returns, remember that you may come to a sadder case; and that many a true Christian hath such withdrawals of the spirit of prayer, as makes them think they are possessed with a dumb devil, and question whether ever they prayed acceptably at all, and cannot so much as observe the groanings of the spirit in them, Rom. 8. 26.

When you are warm and vigorous in the work of God, and find delight in all the ordinances, remember that you are subject to such *sicknesses* as may take away your *appetite*, and make you say, I have no mind to hear, or read or pray: me thinks I feel no sweetness in them! I was wont to go up with comfort to the house of God: I was glad when the Lords Day was come, or nigh: It did me good to see the faces of the Saints: O the *meetings*, the *strivings*, the *lively workings* of soul that I have had in their sweet communion! when they have preached and prayed as full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: But now I do but *force* my self to duty: I go to prayer as against my will: I feel small relish in the word of life.] O how many Christians that little thought of such a day, cry out that *spiritual Death* is upon them: that they are *Dead* to *prayer*, and *dead* to *meditation*, and *dead* to *holy conference*: and that once they thought they were *dead* to the world, and now they find they are *dead* to God. Understand *before* that you are lyable to this, and you may do much to prevent it: and if you should fall into a sickness and loss of appetite, you may be able to difference it from death.

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When you are sweetly refreshed at the *Table* of the Lord, and have there received a *sealed pardon* as from Heaven into your bosoms, and have found *delightfull entertainment* with the Lord, remember that the day *may* come, when *dulness* and *unbelief* and *fears may* so prevail, as to make that an Ordinance of *greatest terror* to you, and you may sit there in trembling, lest you should eat and drink your own damnation: and you may go home in fears lest Satan have there taken possession of you, or lest it have sealed you up to wrath: or you may *fly from* that feast which is your *due*, and Christ invites you to, through fears lest it belong not to you, and should but harden you more in sin: For, alas, this *sad* and *sinfull* case, is too oft the case of *true believers*, that little feared it in their spiritual prosperity. So that the very *high expectations* of such workings of soul, which they cannot oft or ordinarily reach, and the frustrating of those expectations, doth so often turn the *Table of the Lord* into the bitterness of worm-wood, into distracting fears and troubles, that I cannot tell whether any other part of worship occasion so much distress to many that are upright at the heart, as this

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doth, which is appointed for their special consolation.

So when you are clear and vigorous in the *Life of faith*, and can abhor all temptations to *unbelief*, and the beams of sacred Verity in the Scriptures have shewed you that it is the undoubted word of God, and you have quietly bottomed your soul on Christ, and built your hopes upon his promises, and can with a cheerfull contempt let go the world for the accomplishment of your hopes; remember yet that there is a *secret root* of *unbelief* remaining in you, and that this odious sin is but imperfectly mortified in the best: and that its more then possible that you may see the day when the tempter will assault you with questionings of the word of God, and trouble you with the injections of blasphemous thoughts, and doubts, whether it be true or not! and that you that have thought of God, of Christ, of Heaven, of the Immortal state of souls, with joy, and satisfied confidence, may be in the dark about them, affrighted with ugly suggestions of the enemy, and may think of them all with troublesome distracting doubts, and be forced to cry with the Disciples, Luke 17. 5. *Lord increase*

our faith : And as he Mark 9. 24. *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.* Yea worse then so : some upright souls have been so amazed and distracted by the Tempter, and their distempered hearts, as to think they do *not believe* at all, nor yet are able sincerely to say, Lord, help thou my unbelief.] When yet at that time, their *Fears* and their abstaining from iniquity shew, that they *Believe the Threatnings*, and therefore indeed *believe the word*. Now if we did but thoroughly know *ourselves*, when faith is in its exercise and strength, and consider whither the secret seeds of remaining unbelief may bring us, being fore-warned, we should be fore-armed, and should fortifie our faith the better, and be provided against these sad assaults : And if the malignant spirit be suffered to storm this fortress of the soul, we should more manfully resist : and we should not be overwhelmed with horror as soon as any hideous and blasphemous temptations do assault us ; (when Christ himself was not exempted from the most blasphemous temptation, even the worshipping of the Devil instead of God ; though in him there was no sinfull disposition to entertain it, *Mat. 4. 9. 10. John 14. 30.*)

O watch and pray, Christians, in your most prosperous and comfortable state ! Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation : For you little think what is yet within you : and what advantage the deceiver hath , and how much of *your own* to take *his part* , and how low he may bring you both in point of *Grace* and *Peace* , though he cannot *damn* you.

I am troubled that I must tell you of so sad a case, that even the children of God may fall into, lest by troubling you with the opening of your danger , I should do any thing to bring you into it. But because *self-ignorance* and not being before hand acquainted with it , may do much more, I have timely shewed you the danger with the remedy.

3. Another instance of the darkness even of a Heart that in part is sanctified, is in the *successes of the temptations of Adversity*. When we *want nothing*, we think we value not the world, and we could bear the loss of all. But when *poverty* or *danger comes*, what trouble and unseemly whining is there, as if it were by a worldling that is deprived of his Idol , and all the portion that ever he must have. And by the shamefull moan and stir that we make for what

we want, we shew more sinfull overvaluing of it, and love to it, then before we observed or would believe. ○ how *confidently* and *piously* have I heard some inveigh against the *Love of the world*, as if there had been no such thing *in them*; who yet have been so basely dejected, when they have been unexpectedly stript of their estates, as if they had been quite undone!

How patiently do we think we could bear affliction, till we *feel* it! And how easily and piously can we exhort *others* unto patience, when *we* have no *sense* of what they suffer! But when *our turn* is come, alas, we seem to be *other men*. *Suffering* is now *another thing*; and *Patience* harder then we imagined. And how inclinable are we to hearken to temptations, to use *sinfull means* to come out of our sufferings! Who would have thought that faithfull *Abraham* should have been so unbelieving as to equivocate in such a danger, and expose the chastity of his wife to hazzard, as we read in *Gen. 12. 12, 13, 19.*? And that he should fall into the same sin, again on the same occasion, *Gen. 20.* to *Abimelech*, as before he had done with *Pharaoh*! And that *Isaac* should after him fall into the same sin, in the

the same place ! *Gen. 26. 7.* The Life of Faith doth set us so much above the fear of man, and shew us the weakness and nothingness of mortal worms, and the faithfulness and al-sufficiency of God, that one would think the frowns and threatnings of a man should *signifie nothing* to us, when God stands by, and giveth us such ample promises and security for our confirmation and encouragement : And yet what base dejectedness, and sinfull compliances are many brought to through the fear of man, that before the hour of this temptation, could talk as couragiously as any ! This was the case of *Peter*, before mentioned : and of many a one that hath wounded conscience, and wronged their profession by too cowardly a disposition : which if it were *fore-known*, we might do more for our confirmation, and should betake our selves in time to Christ in the use of means for strength. Few turn their backs on Christ, or a good cause in time of tryal, that *are jealous of themselves before hand*, and afraid lest they should forsake him : Few fall that are afraid of falling : But the self-ignorant and self-confident are careless of their way, and it is they that fall.

6. Another instance that I may give you, is, in the *unexpected* appearances of *Pride* in those that yet are truly humble. *Humility* speaks in their *confessions*, aggravating their sin, and searching heart and life for matter of self-accusation : They call themselves *Less then the least of all Gods mercies* : They are ready with the woman of *Canaan*, *Mat. 15. 27.* even to own the name of *dogs*, and to confess themselves unworthy of the *childrens crumbs*, and unworthy to tread upon the common earth, or to breath in the air, or to live upon the patience and provisions of God : They will spend whole hours, and dayes of humiliation, in confessing their sin, and bewailing their weaknesses and want of grace, and lamenting their desert of misery : They are oft cast down so much *too low*, that they dare not own the title of *Gods children*, nor any of his special grace, but take themselves for meer unsanctified hardened sinners : and all that can be said will not convince them that they have any saving interest in Christ : nor hinder them from pouring out unjust accusations against themselves. And all this is done by them in the *uprightness* of their hearts, and *not dissemblingly*. And yet would you think, that

that with all this Humility, there should be *any pride*? and that the *same* persons should lift up themselves and resist their helps to further Humiliation? Do they think in their dejections, that it is in their hearts so much to exalt themselves? I confess many of them are sensible of their Pride, even to the increase of their *humility*: and as it is said of *Hezekiah*, do humble themselves for the pride of their hearts, so that Gods wrath doth not come upon them, 2 Chr. 32. 26. But yet too few are so well acquainted with the power and rootedness of this sin at the heart, and the workings of it in the hour of temptation, as they should be. Observe it but at such times as these, and you will see that break forth, that before appeared not. 1. When we are *undervalued* and *slighted*, and meaner persons preferred before us, and when our words and judgements are made light of, and our parts thought to be poor and low: when any blot of dishonour is cast upon us, deserved or undeserved; when we are slandered or reproached, and used with despight: what a matter do we make of it, and how much then doth our *Pride* appear in our distaste and offence, and impatience! so that the same person that can

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pour out words of blame and shame *against himself*, cannot bear *half* as much from others without displeasure and disquietness of mind. It would help us much to *know* this by our selves in the time of our *humility*, that we may be engaged to more watchfulness and resistance of our pride.

2. When we are *reproved* of any *disgraceful sin*, how hardly goes it down, and how many excuses have we? how seldom are we brought to downright penitent confessions? What secret distaste is apt to be rising in our hearts, against the reprover! And how seldom hath he that hearty thanks which so great a benefit deserves! And would any think in our humiliations and large confessions unto God, that we were so proud! To *know* this by our selves, would make us more suspicious and ashamed to be guilty of it.

3. When any preferment or honour is to be given, or any work to be done that is a mark of dignity, how apt are we to think our selves as fit for it as any, and to be displeased, if the honour or employment do pass by us!

4. When we are admired, applauded, or excessively esteemed and loved, how apt are we to be too much pleased with it?
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which sheweth a proud desire to be some body in the world : and that there is much of this venom at the bottom in our hearts, even when we lay our selves in the dust, and walk in sackcloth, and pass the heaviest judgement on our selves.

7. Another instance of our *unacquaintance with our hearts*, and the latent undiscerned corruption of them, is, our *little discerning or bewailing those secret master sins, which lie at the root of all the rest*, and are the life of the old man, and the cause of all the miscarriages of our lives. As 1. *Unbelief* of the truth of the holy Scriptures, of the immortality of the soul, and the life of joy or misery hereafter, and the other Articles of the Christian faith : What abundance of Christians are sensible of their *unbelief* as to the *applying acts* of faith that tend to their *assurance* of their own salvation, that are little sensible of any defect in the *Assenting act*, or of any secret root of unbelief about the truth of the Gospel revelations : And yet, alas, it is *this* that weakeneth all our graces : It is *this* that feedeth all our wo ! O happy men were we free from *this* ! What *prayers* should we put up ! What *lives* should we lead ! how watch;

watchfully should we walk ! with what contempt should we look on the allurements of the world ! with what disdain should we think on fleshly lusts ! with what indignation should we meet the tempter, and scorn his base unreasonable motions, if we did but *perfectly believe* the very *truth of the Gospel*, and *world to come* ! How carefull and earnest should we be, to make our calling and election sure ! How great a matter should we make of sin, and of helps and hinderances in the way to Heaven ! How much should we prefer that state of life that furthereth our salvation, before that which strengtheneth our snares by furthering our prosperity and pleasure in the world, if we were not weak or wanting in our *belief* of the the *certain verity* of these things ? Did we better know the badness of our hearts herein, it would engage us more in fortifying the vitals, and looking better to our foundation, and winding up this *spring of faith*, which must give life to all right motions of the soul.

2. How *insensible* are too many of the great imperfection of their *love to God* ! What passionate complaints have we of their want of *sorrow* for their sin, and want of *memory*,

worry, and of ability to pray, &c. when their complaints for want of *Love to God*, and more affecting knowledge of him, are so cold and customary, as shews us they little observe the greatness of *this* sinfull want ! *This* is the very heart, and summ, and poyson of all the sins of our soul and life. So much as a man *Loves God*, so much he is *Holy*: and so much he hath of the spirit and image of Jesus Christ: and so much he hath of all saving graces: and so much he will abhor iniquity, and so much he will love the commands of God. As *Love* is the summ of the *Law* and *Prophecs*, so should it be the summ of our care and study through all our lives to exercise and strengthen it.

3. How little are most Christians troubled for want of *Love to men* ! (to Brethren, neighbours and enemies) how cold are their complaints for their defects in *this*, in comparison of other of their complaints ! But is there not cause of as deep humiliation for *this* sin, as almost any other ? It seems to me that want of *Love* is one of the most prevalent diseases among us, when I hear it so little seriously lamented. I oft hear people say, O that we could hear more attentively and affectionately,

nately, and pray more fervently, and weep for sin more plenteously: But how seldom do I hear them say, O that we did love our Brethren more ardently, and our Neighbours and Enemies more heartily than we do, and set our selves to do them good! There is so little pains taken to bring the heart to the Love of others, and so few and cold requests put up for it, when yet the heart is backward to it, that makes me conclude that Charity is weaker in most of us than we observe. And indeed it appeareth so when it comes to tryal: to that tryal which Christ will judge it by at last, *Mat. 25.* When Love must be shewed by any self-denial, or costly demonstration, by parting with our food and rayment, to supply the wants of others, and by hazarding our selves for them in their distress, then see how much we Love indeed! Good words cost little: so cheap an exercise of charity as is mentioned, *Jam. 2. 15, 16.* [*Depart in peace; be warmed, and filled*] is an insufficient evidence of the life of grace; and will do as little for the soul of the giver, as for the Body of the receiver. And how little hazardous or costly Love is found among us, either to enemies, neighbours, or to Saints! Did we better know our hearts, there would

be more *care* and *diligence* used to bring them to *effectual fervent Love*, then to those duties that are of less importance; and we should learn what this meaneth, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*, Mat. 9. 13. & 12. 7. which Christ sets the Pharisees twice to learn. More instances of greatest duties extenuated I might add, but I proceed.

8. Another instance of unobserved corruption of the heart, is, *The frequent and secret insinuations of selfishness in all that we do toward God or man*: When we think we are serving God alone, and have cleansed our hearts from mixtures and deceit, before we are aware, *self-interest*, or *self-esteem*, or *self-conceit*, or *self-love*, or *self-will*, or *self-seeking* do secretly creep in and marr the work. We think we are studying and preaching, and writing purely for God, and the common good, or the benefit of souls; and perhaps little observe how subtilly selfishness insinuates, and makes a party, and byasseth us from the holy ends, and the simplicity and sincerity which we thought we had carefully maintained: so that we are studying and preaching, and writing for *our selves*, when we take no notice of it.

When we enter upon any *office*, or de-
fire

re preferment, or riches, or honour in the world, we think we do it purely *for God*, to furnish us for *his service*, and little think how much of *selfishness* is in our desires.

When we are *doing Justice*, or *showing mercy*, in giving *alms*, or exhorting the ungodly to repent, or doing any other work of *Piety* or *Charity*, we little think how much of *selfishness* is secretly latent in the end and intention of the heart.

When we think we are defending the truth and cause of God, by disputing, writing, or by the sword; or when we think we are faithfully maintaining on one side *order* and *obedience* against *confusion* and *turbulent disquiet spirits*, or the *Unity* of the Church against *division*; or on the other hand that we are sincerely opposing Pharisaicall corruptions and hypocrisie, and tyrannie, and persecution, and are defending the purity of Divine worship, and the power and spiritualty of religion; in all these cases we little know how much of *carnal self* may be secretly unobserved in the work.

But above all others, Christ himself, and the Holy Ghost that searcheth the hidden things of the heart, hath warned *one sort*

to be suspicious of their hearts; and that is, those that cannot bear the dissent and infirmities of their brethren in tolerable things, and those that are calling for fire from heaven, and are all for force and cruelty in religion; for vexing, imprisoning, banishing, burning, hanging, or otherwise doing as they would not be done by, proportionably in their own case. He tells his two Disciples, in such a case] *You know not what manner of spirit ye are of, Luke 9. 55. As if he should say, You think you purely seek my honour in the revenge of this contempt and opposition of unbelievers, and you think it would much redound to the propagation of the faith: and therefore you think that all this zeal is purely from my spirit: But you little know how much of a proud, a carnal, selfish spirit is in these desires! You would fain have me and your selves with me to be openly vindicated by fire from heaven, and be so owned by God that all men may admire you, and you may exercise a dominion in the world; and you stick not at the sufferings and ruine of these sinners, so you may attain your end: but I tell you this selfish cruel spirit, is unlike my spirit which inclineth to patience, forbearance and compassion.*

So Rom. 14. 1, 2, &c. & 15. 1, 2. *Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye — who art thou that judgest another mans servant? Why dost thou judge thy brother, and why dost thou set at nought thy brother? We shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ. — Every one of us shall give account of himself to God — We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification: So Gal. 6. 1, 2. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thy self lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one anothers burden, and so fulfill the Law of Christ.]*

So also men are foully and frequently mistaken, when they are zealously contending against their faithfull Pastors and their brethren, and vilifying others, and quenching love, and troubling the Church, upon pretence of greater knowledge or integrity in themselves: which is notably discovered and vehemently prest by the Apostle, James 3. 1, &c. where you may see how greatly the judgement of the spirit of God concerning our hearts doth differ from mens judgement of themselves. They that

had a *masterly, contentious, envious zeal*, did think they were of the *wiser sort* of Christians, and of the *highest form* in the School of Christ; when yet the Holy Ghost telleth them that their wisdom descended not from above, but was earthly, sensual and devilish, and that their envy and strife doth bring confusion, and every evil work: and that the wisdom from above is neither *unholy nor contentious*, but *first pure, and then peaceable, gentle and easie to be entreated*, Jam. 3. 17.

You see then how oft and dangerously we are deceived, by unacquaintedness with our selves; and how *selfish carnal principles, ends and motives* are oft mixed in the actions which we think are the most excellent for *wisdom, zeal, and piety* that ever we did perform. O therefore what cause have we to study, and search, and watch such hearts, and not too boldly or carelessly to trust them!

And it is not *only Hypocrites* that are subject to these deceitfull sins, who have them in dominion, but *true Believers* that have a remnant of this carnal selfish principle continually offering to insinuate and corrupt their most excellent works, and even all that they do.

9. *The strong eruption of those passions that seemed to be quite mortified, doth shew that there is more evil lurking in the heart, then ordinarily doth appear. How calmly do we converse together? how mildly do we speak? till some provoking word or wrong do blow the coals, and then the dove appeareth to partake of a fiercer nature, and we can perceive that in the flame, which we perceived not in the spark. When a provocation can bring forth censorious, reviling, scornfull words, it shews what before was latent in the heart.*

10. *We are very apt to think those affections to be purely spiritual, which in the issue appear to be mixed with carnality. Our very love to the Assemblies and ordinances of worship, and to Ministers, and other servants of the Lord; to Books, and Knowledge; are ordinarily mixt; and good and bad are strangely complicate, and twisted together in the same affections and works. And the Love that beginneth in the spirit, is apt to degenerate into carnal Love, and to have too much respect to Riches, or Honour, or personage, or birth, or particular concernments of our own, and so it is corrupted, as Wine that turneth into Vinegar, before we are aware. And though still*

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there be *uprightness* of heart, yet too much *Hypocrisie* is joyned with it, when it is little perceived or suspected.

And thus in *ten Instances* I have shewed you how much the servants of Christ themselves may be mistaken or unacquainted with their hearts; and how the work of mortification is hindered by this *covering* of so many *secret unobserved* sins.

But I must here desire you to take heed of running into their extream, who here-upon conclude that their hearts being so dark and so deceitfull, are not at all to be understood; and therefore they are still so suspicious of the worst, as that they will not be perswaded of the grace that plainly worketh in them, and will condemn themselves for that which they are not guilty of, upon suspicion that they may be guilty and not know it: and think that all the sin that they forbear, is but for want of a Temptation; and that if they had the *same Temptations*, they should be as bad as any others.

I would intreat these persons to consider of these truths, for their better information. 1. Temptations do not only *shew* the evil that is in the heart, but *breed much more*, and turn a *spark* into a *flame*; as the
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Striking of the steel upon the flint doth by the *collision* and *tinder*, make fire where was none. *Adam* was made a sinner by temptation.

2. There is *no Christian* so mortified, but hath such remnants of corruption and concupiscence as would quickly bring forth heynous sins, if *Temptations beyond strength* were let loose upon him. What need you more proof then the sad instances of *Noah, Lot, David, Solomon* and *Peter*? It did not prove that any of these were *graceless hyproerites* before, because they fell so foully by Temptations. And yet these Objectors think *they* are *graceless*, because some strong Temptation *might* make them fall.

3. It is not *Gods way of saving men*, to give them *so much inward Grace* as *no Temptation* can overcome, but to preserve and bring them safe to heaven, by *moral sapiential conduct*, together with internal changes of their hearts. And therefore he *keepeth men from sin*, by *keeping them from Temptations* that are *too strong* for them. All humane strength is limited. And there are none on earth have such a measure of grace, but a Temptation may be imagined so strong as to overcome them. And if
God

God should let Satan do his worst, there must be extraordinary assistances to preserve us, or we should fall. Bless God if he *lead you not into Temptation*, but *deliver you from the Evil*, by keeping you far enough from the snare. This is the way of preservation that we are taught to pray and hope for.

4. And therefore it is our own duty to keep as far from *Temptations* as we can; and if we have *Grace to avoid the sin by avoiding the Temptation*, we have *such Grace* as God useth for the saving of his own: Not that he *hath saving grace* that would live wickedly if he were but tempted to it by those *ordinary tryals* that humane nature may expect: But the soul that preferreth *God and Glory* before the *pleasures* of sin for a season, if it so continue, shall be saved, though possibly there *migh have been a Temptation* so strong as would have conquered the measure of grace that he had, if it had not been fortified with *new supplies*. It is therefore more dotage in those that could find in their hearts to *put themselves upon some Temptation*, to try whether they are *sincere* by the *success*. Avoid *temptation*, that you may avoid the *sin* and *punishment*. *Make* not your selves worse on pre-
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rence of *discovering* how *bad* you are. Put not Gunpowder or fuell to the sparks of corruption that still remain in you , on pretence of trying whether they will burn. All men are *defectible*, and *capable* of every sin, and must be saved from it by that Grace which worketh on nature according to that nature, and prevaileth with Reason by means agreeable to Reason. If we think we are *wicked*, because we find that we have hearts that *could be wicked*, were they let alone, and because we are not removed so far from sin as to be *uncapable* of it, we may as well say *Adam* was wicked in his innocency: much more *David*, *Solomon* and *Peter* before their falls. It is not he that *Can sin* that shall be punished: but he that *doth sin*, or *would sin if he could*, and had rather have the sin for its *Pleasure* or *Commodity* to the *flesh*, than be free from it, and be *Holy*, in order to salvation, and the favour and pleasing and enjoying of God in endless Glory.

5. Lastly, Let such persons try themselves by their conquest over the Temptations *which they have*, and not by imaginary conflicts with all that they think *may possibly* at any time assault them. You have still the same *flesh* to deal with, and the same world and Devil

devil that will not let you go to heaven without Temptation : If the Temptations which you have already, keep you not from preferring the Love and fruition of God before the Pleasure of the Flesh ; and a life of faith and Holiness, before a life of infidelity and impiety and sensuality , so that you had rather live the former than the latter, I am sure then your Temptations have not kept you from a state of grace. And you may be assured, that for the time to come, if you watch and pray, you may escape the danger of temptation ; and that God will increase your strength if he increase your tryals : Be not secure, be you never so *Holy*: Think not that you have nature that *cannot* sin, or cannot be tempted to a love of sin : But *let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. There bath no temptation taken you, but such as is moderate, or common to man : but God is faithfull ; who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it, 1 Cor. 10. 13.*

And thus I have shewed you how *self-ignorance* hindereth the conquest and mortifying of sin, even in the Godly, and now shall add some further motives.

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2. Not knowing our selves, and the secret corruptions of our hearts, doth *make sin surprize us the more dangerously*, and break forth the more *shamefully*, and wound our consciences the more terribly. The unsuspected sin hath left opposition, and when it breaks out doth like an unobserved fire, go far before we are awakened to quench it. And it confoundeth us with shame, to find our selves so much worse then we imagined. It overwhelmeth the soul with despairing thoughts to find it self *so bad*, when it thought it had been *better*. It breedeth endless suspicions and fears, when we find our former opinions of our selves confuted, and that contrary to our expectations we are surprized where we thought we had been safe: we are still ready to think what ever we discern that is good within us, that we may as well be mistaken *now* as we were *before*. And thus our present *self-ignorance* when discovered, may hinder all the comforts of our lives.

3. Lastly, not *knowing our selves*, and our particular sins and wants, and weaknesses, doth keep us from a particular application of the promises, and from seeking those particular Remedies from Christ, which our case requireth: and so our mercies

cies lie by neglected, while we need them and do not understand our need.

And thus I have shewed you why you should labour to know your sinfulness.

II. I am next to perswade *Believers* to know their *Graces* and their *happiness*. Good is the object of *voluntary knowledge*: but *Evil* of *forced involuntary knowledge*, unless as the *knowledge of evil* tendeth to some *Good*. Therefore methinks you should be readiest to *this part* of the study of your selves. And yet, alas, the *presumptuous* are not more unwilling to know their sin and misery, then some *perplexed Christians* are backward to acknowledge their Grace and Happiness. How hard is it to convince them of the tender love of *God* towards them, and of the sincerity of *their Love* to him? and to make them believe that they are *dear to God* when they *loath themselves*! how hard is it to perswade them that the Riches of Christ, the promises of the Gospel, and the Inheritance of the Saints, belong to them! And the Reasons among others are principally these.

1. The *remnants of sin* are so great, and so *active and troublesome*, as that the *feeling* of these *contrary* dispositions doth hinder them

them from observing the operations of grace. It is not easie to discern the sincerity of *Faith* among so much *unbelief*, or the sincerity of *Love* where there is so much *aversness*: or of *Humility* where there is so much *pride*: or of *Repentance* and *Mortification*, where there is so much *Concupiscence* and inclination to sin: Especially when grace by its enmity to sin doth make the soul so suspicious and sensible of it, as that the observation of it turns their mind from the observation of the contrary *good* that is in them. Health is not observed in other parts, when the feeling of the stone, or but a tooth-ache takes us up. The *thoughts* are called all to the *part affected*; And *sickness* and *wounds* are felt more sensibly then *Health*. The *fears* of misery by sin, are *easily excited*, and are more *passionate*, then *Love* and *Hope*, and all the affections that are imployed in the prosecution of *good*. And in the midst of *Fears* it is hard to *feel* the matter of our *Joys*. *Fear* is a tyrant if it exceed, and will not permit us to believe or observe the *cause* of *Hope*. *Quod nimis metuunt miser, hoc facile credunt, & nunquam amoveri putant,* saith *Seneca*, What we too much fear, we too easily believe, and hardly believe that it is gone,

gone, and the danger past. These fears are usefull to our preservation: but they too often pervert our judgements, and hinder our due consolation. *Qui insidias timet, in nullas incidet: nec cito perit ruina, qui ruinam timet. Semper metuendo sapiens vitat malum,* saith Seneca. He that feareth snares, doth not fall into them: Nor doth he quickly perish by ruine, that feareth ruine: A wise man escapeth evil by alwayes fearing it.] And the Holy Ghost saith, Prov. 28. 14. Happy is the man that feareth alwayes, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.]

Moderate Fears then are given to Believers for their necessary preservation, that walking among enemies and snares, they may take heed and scape them. But when this passion doth exceed, it abuseth us, and drowns the voice of Reason: It maketh us believe that every temptation is a sin, and every sin is such as cannot stand with grace, and will hardly ever be pardoned by Christ. Every sin against knowledge and conscience, doth seem almost unpardonable: and if ^{it} were deliberate after profession of religion, it seems to be the sin against the Holy Ghost. As children and other frightfull persons that fear the Devil by way of Apparitions, do think in the dark he is ready
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to lay hold on them, and they look when they see him: so the *fearful Christian*, as is still thinking that thing he feareth is upon him, or coming upon him. The *fear* of an *unregenerate unpardoned* state, doth make him think he is in it; and ~~the~~ the *fear* of the *wrath* of *God* doth make him think that he is under it; and the *fear* of *dammation* makes him imagine he shall be damned. It is wonderfull hard in a *frightfull* state, or indeed in *any* *passion* that is strong, to have the *free use* of *Judgement* for the knowing of our selves, and to discern any grace, or evidence or mercy, which is *contrary* to our *fears*; Especially when the *Feeling* of much corruption, doth turn our eyes from the observation of the good, and we are still taken up with the matter of our disease.

2. Another cause that we hardly know our *Graces*, is, because they are *weak* and *small*; and therefore in the midst of so much corruption are oft-times hardly discerned from none. A little *faith* even as a grain of *mustard seed*, may save us: A little *Love* to *God* that is sincere, will be accepted; and *weak* *Desires* may be fulfilled: But they are frequently *undiscerned*, or their sincerity *questioned* by those that have them; and therefore bring but little

comfort. Peters Little faith did keep him from drowning, but not from doubting and fearing he should be drowned, nor from beginning to sink, Mat. 14. 29, 30, 31. He walked on the water to go to Jesus; but when he saw the wind boisterous he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cryed saying, Lord save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt!] So the Little faith of the Disciples kept them from perishing, but not from their fear of perishing, Mat. 8. 24, 25, 26. When a great tempest arose, so that the ship was covered with waves, they cry, Lord save us, we perish: and he saith to them, Why are ye afraid, O ye of little faith? The little faith of the same Disciples entitled them to the Fatherly protection and provision of God: but it kept them not from sinfull cares and fears, about what they should eat or drink, or wherewith they should be cloathed, as is intimated in Mat. 6. 25, 28, 30. Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or drink, or for your body what you shall put on ——— Why take ye thought for rayment? — If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not
much

much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? So in *Mat.* 16. 7, 8. The seed that Christ likeneth his kingdom to, *Mat.* 13. 31. hath life while it is buried in the earth, and is visible while a little seed; but is not so observed as when it cometh to be as a tree. Though God despise not the day of little things, *Zech.* 4. 10. and though he will not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax, *Isa.* 42. 3. yet our selves or others cannot discern and value these obscure beginnings, as God doth. But because we cannot easily find a little faith and a little Love when we are looking for it, we take the non-appearance for a non-existence, and call it none.

3. Sanctification is oft unknown to those that have it, because they do not try and judge themselves by sure infallible Marks, the Essentials of the new man; but by uncertain qualifications, that are mutable, and belong but to the beauty and activity of the soul.

The Essence of Holiness as denominated from the object, is the Consent to the three Articles of the Covenant of Grace. 1. That we give up our selves to God as our God and Reconciled Father in Jesus Christ. 2. That we give up our selves to Jesus Christ as our Redeemer and Saviour, to recover us, reconcile us and bring us unto God. 3. That we

give up our selves to the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier, to guide and illuminate us, and perfect the Image of God upon us, and prepare us for Glory.

The *Essence* of Sanctification as denominated from its *opposite objects*, is nothing but our Renunciation and Rejection of the *flesh, the World, and the Devil, of Pleasures, Profits and Honours*, as they would be preferred before God, and draw us to forsake him.

The *Essence* of Sanctification as denominated from our *Faculties* which are the subject of it, is nothing but this preferring of God, and Grace, and Glory above the said Pleasures, Profits and Honours. 1. By the *Estimation of our Understandings*: 2. By the *Resolved habituate Choice of our Wills*. 3. And in the *bent and drift of our Endeavours* in our Conversations. In these three *Acts*, as upon the first three objects, and against the other three objects, lyeth all that is *Essential* to Sanctification, and that we should judge of our sincerity, and title to salvation by, as I before shewed.

But besides these there are many desirable qualities and gifts, which we may seek for, and be thankfull for; but are not *Essential* to our Sanctification. Such are

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1. The *knowledge of other Truths* besides the *Essentials of Faith and duty*; and the *soundness of judgement* and freedom from error in these *lesser points*.

2. A *strong memory* to carry away the things that we read and hear.

3. A *right order* of our *Thoughts*, when we can keep them from Confusion, roving and distraction.

4. *Freedom* from *too strong affections* about the creatures, and from disturbing *passions*.

5. *Lively Affections and feeling operations* of the soul towards God, in holy duty: and tender *melting* of the heart for *sin*: which are very *desireable*, but depend so much on the *temperature* of the *body*, and *outward accidents*, and are but the *vigor* and not the *Life and being* of the new creature, that we must not *judge* of our *sincerity* by them. Some Christians scarce know what any such *lively feelings* are: and some have them very *seldom*, and I think, *no one, constantly*: and therefore if our *Peace*, or *Judgement of our selves*, be laid on these, we shall be still wavering and unsettled, and tost up and down as the waves of the sea; Sometimes seeming to be almost in Heaven, and presently near the gates of Hell: When

our *state* doth not change at all as these *feelings* and *Affectionate* motions of the soul do; but we are still in our *safe Relation* to God, while our *first Essential* graces do continue; though our failings, dulness, weaknesses and wants, must be matter of *moderate filial humiliation* to us.

6. The same must be said of all *common Gifts*, of *utterance* in conference or prayer, and of quickness of understanding and suchlike.

7. Lastly, the same must be said also of all *that rectitude of life*, and those degrees of *obedience* that are *above meer sincerity*: in which *one true Christian* doth exceed another; and in which we should all *desire to abound*; but must not judge our selves to be *unsanctified* meerly because we are *imperfect*; or to be *unjustified sinners*, meerly because we are *sinners*.

In our judging of our selves by our *Lives* and *Practices* two *extreams* must be carefully avoided: On the left hand that of the *Prophane*, and of the *Antinomians*; The former cannot distinguish between sinners and *sinners*, *sanctified* and *unsanctified*, Justified and unjustified *sinners*; and when they have once conceived that they are in the favour of God, whatever they do,

do, they say, *we are but sinners, and so are
the best.* The latter teach men, that when
once they are justified, they are not for any
sins to doubt again of their Justified state,
lest they should seem to make God change-
able.

On the *other hand* must be avoided this
extream of perplexed doubting Christians,
that make *all their sins*, or *too many of them*,
to be matter of *doubting*, which should be
but matter of *humiliation*.

I know it is a very great difficulty that
hath long perplexed the Doctors of the
Church, to define *what sins are consistent*,
*and what inconsistent with a state of Holi-
ness and Salvation*, (which if any distinguish
by the names of *Mortal* and *Venial*, taking
the words in no other sense, I shall not
quarrell with them.) At the present I shall
say but this for the resolving of this great
and weighty question.

1. It is not the bare *Act of sin in it self*
considered, that must determine the case :
but the *Act* compared with the *Life of*
Grace, and with *true Repentance*. Whoever
hath the *Love of God* and *Life of Grace*, is in
a state of Salvation : And therefore what-
ever sin consisteth with the fore-described
Essentials of Sanctification, (viz. *The Ha-*

bituall devotion of the soul to God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and the Habitual renunciation of the Flesh, the World and Devil) consisteth with a state of life. And *true Repentance* proveth the pardon of all sin: And therefore whatever sin consisteth with *Habitual Repentance*, (which is the *Hatred of sin as sin*,) and hath *Actuall Repentance* when it is observed, and there is *time of deliberation*, consisteth with a state of *Grace*. Now in *Habitual Conversion or Repentance*, the *Habitual Willingness* to leave our sins, must be more then our *sinfull Habitual Willingness* to keep it. Now you may by this, much discern as to *particular acts*, whether they are consistent with *Habitual hatred of sin*. For some sins are so much in the power of the will, that he that hath an *Habitual hatred* of them, cannot frequently commit them; And some sins are also of so heynous a nature or degree, that he that *Habitually hates sin*, cannot frequently commit them: nor at all, while his *Hatred* to them is in *Act*: And he that *truly Repenteth* of them, cannot frequently return to them: because that sheweth that *Repentance* was indeed either but *Superficial*, or not *Habitual*. But some sins are not so great and heynous, and therefore do not

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so much *deter* the soul, and some are not so fully in the power of a *sanctified will* (as *passions, thoughts, &c.*) and therefore may *after* be committed in consistency with *Ha-OFER*
bitual Repentance or *Hatred* of sin. To examine particulars, would be tedious and digressive.

2. And I must further answer, that our *safety*, and consequently our *Peace* and *comfort* lieth in *flying as far* from sin as we can: And therefore he that *will sin* as much as will consist with *any sparks* of *Grace*, shall *bury* those *sparks* by his *sin*, and shall *not know* that he hath *any Grace*, nor have the *comfort* of it; as being in a condition *unfit* for *Actual assurance* and *comfort* till he be brought to *Actual Repentance* and *amendment*.

Thus I have shewed you, by what you must try your *sanctification*, if you will know it: which I before proved to you from *Scripture*: and further may do, when the occasion will excuse me from the imputation of disproportion and unseasonableness, in repeating the proofs of all that we speak in *Explication* or *Application* of the principal point.

4. Another cause that many *Christians* are *ignorant* of their *state of Grace*, is their
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looking so much at what they should be, and what others are that have a high degree of grace, and what is commanded as our duty, that they observe not what they have already, because it is short of what they ought to have. We are thus too much about outward mercies too. We mourn more for one friend that is dead, then we rejoyce in many that are alive: We are more troubled for one mercy taken from us, then comforted in many that are left us. We observe our diseases and our sores more sensibly then our health. David for one Absalon is so afflicted that he wished he had dyed for him, though a rebell! when his comfort in Solomon and his other children is laid aside. As all the humours flow to the pained place, so do our thoughts as was aforesaid, and so we overlook the matter of our comfort.

5. And it very much hindereth the knowledge of our Graces, that we search upon so great disadvantages as hinder a true discovery. Among many others, I will instance but in two or three. 1. We surprize our souls with sudden questions, and look for a full and satisfactory answer, before we can well recollect our selves, and call up our evidences; and we expect to know the

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summ or *product*, before our consciences have had leisure deliberately to cast up their accounts. Yea when we *have* set to it, and by diligent search with the best assistances, have *discovered our sincerity*, and *recorded the judgement*, if Conscience cannot *presently* recall its proofs, and make it out upon every surprize, we unjustly question all *that* is past, and will *never rest* in any judgement, but are still calling over all again, as if the cause had never been tryed. And then the judgement passeth according to our *present temper and disposition*, when many of the *Circumstances* are forgotten, and many of the *witnesses* are out of the way, that last assisted us.

2. Perhaps we judge (as I said before) in the fit of a *passion*, of *fear* or *grief*, which imperiously over-ruleth or disturbeth *reason*. And then no wonder if in our haste we say that all men that would comfort us are lyars. And if with *David*, *Psal.* 77. 2, 3, 7, 8, 9. in the *day of our trouble*, our souls do even *refuse to be comforted*, and if we *remember God* and are troubled more, and if our *spirit be overwhelmed in us*: when he *holdeth our eyes waking*, and we are so troubled that we cannot *speak*: and if we question whether the *Lord will cast off forever*, and
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will be favourable no more : whether his mercy be clean gone for ever , and his promise fail for evermore ? Whether he hath forgotten to be gracious, and hath shut up his tender mercies in displeasure ? till a calm deliver us from the mistake , and make us say, [*This is our infirmity*] We think that God doth cast off our souls, and hideth his face from us ; when our soul is full of troubles, and our life draweth nigh unto the grave ; When we are afflicted and ready to die from our youth up, and are distracted, while we suffer the terrors of the Lord : as he complaineth Psalm 88. 3. 14, 15, 16. *Passion judgeth according to its nature, and not according to truth.*

3. Or perhaps we judge , when our friends, our memory and other helps are out of the way, and we are destitute of due assistance.

4. Or when our Bodies are weak or distempered with Melancholy, which representeth all this in black and terrible colours to the soul, and will hear no language but [*for-saken, miserable, and undone.*] You may as well take the judgement of a man half drunk, or half asleep, about the greatest matters of your lives, as to take the judgement of Conscience in such a state of dis-

disadvantage, about the condition of your souls.

6. Another hinderance to us is, that *we cannot take comfort from the former sight of grace that we have had, unless we have a continued present sight.* And to all our labour in trying, and all our experiences, and all Gods former manifestations of himself to the soul are lost, as to our present comfort, when over Grace is out of sight. Like foolish ovr travellers that think they are out of the way, and are ready to turn back, when ever any hill doth interpose, and hinder them from seeing the place they go to. As if it were no matter of comfort to us, to say, I did find the Evidences of Grace: I once recorded a judgement of my sincerity: But the former is still questioned rather then the later. When with David we should consider the dayes of old, the years of antient times, and call to remembrance our songs in the night, and commune with our hearts in such a diligent search, and remembrance of the mercies formerly received, *Psal. 77. 5, 6, 7.*

7. Lastly, the operations of mans soul are naturally so various, and from corruption are so confused and so dark, that we are oft-times in a maze and at a loss, when
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we are *most desirous* to judge aright : and scarce *know where* in so great disorder to find any thing that we seek ; and *know it not* when we find it : so that our hearts are almost as strange to *themselves* as to *one another* ; and sometime *more confident* of other mens sincerity then our *own*, where there is no more matter for our confidence.

HAVING thus shewed you the *Causes* of our *Ignorance* of our Sanctification ; I shall briefly tell you some *Reasons* that should *move* you to seek to be acquainted with it, where it is.

1. The knowledge of *God* is the most excellent knowledge : and therefore the best sort of creature knowledge is , that which hath the *most of God* in it. And undoubtedly there is *more of God* in *Holiness* which is his *Image*, then in common things. *Sins* and *wants* have *nothing* of *God* in them : They must be fathered on the *Devil* and *yourselves*. And therefore the knowledge of them is good but by *Accident* ; because the *knowledge* even of evil, hath a *tendency* to good. And therefore it is commanded and made our duty, for the *good* which it *tendeth* to. It is the *Divine nature*, and *Image* within you
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which hath the *most* of God; and therefore to know this, is the high and noble knowledge. To know *Christ within us*, is our happiness on *earth*, in order to the knowledge of him in *Glory face to face*, which is the happiness of *heaven*. To know God though *darkly through a glass*, and *but in part*, (1 Cor. 13. 12.) is far above all *creature knowledge*. The knowledge of him raiseth, quickneth, sanctifieth, enlargeth and advanceth all our faculties. It is *life eternal to know God in Christ*, John 17. 3. Therefore where God appeareth *most*, there should our understandings be *most* diligently exercised in study and observation.

2. It is a most *delightfull felicitating knowledge*, to know that *Christ is in you*. If it be *delightfull* to the *Rich* to see their *wealth*, their houses, and lands and goods and money: and if it be *delightfull* to the *Honourable* to see their attendance, and hear their own commendations and applause; how *delightfull* must it be to a true *Believer* to find *Christ within him*, and to know his title to eternal life? If the knowledge of *full barns*, and *much goods laid up for many years*, can make a sensual worldling say, *Soul take thy ease, eat, drink*
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and be merry; *Luke 12. 19, 20.* Me thinks the knowledge of our interest in *Christ* and *heaven*, should make us say, [*Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more then in the time that their corn and wine increased, (that is, more then corn and wine could put into theirs)* *Psal. 4. 7.* [*Return unto thy Rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee, Psal. 116. 7.*] If we say with *David*, [*Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee,*] *Psal. 84. 4.* much more may we say, [*Blessed are they in whom Christ dwelleth, and the Holy Ghost hath made his Temple:*] they should be still praising thee, [*Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee; that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy Temple, Psal. 63. 4.* But this is upon supposition, that he be first *Blessed* by *Christ's* approach to him, and dwelling in him.

If you ask, *How it is that Christ dwelleth in us*; I answer, 1. *Objectively*, as he is apprehended by our *Faith* and *Love*: As the things or persons that we think of, and *Love* and *delight* in, are said to dwell in our minds or hearts. 2. By the *Holy Ghost*, who as a principle of *new* and *heavenly Life*, is given by *Christ* the *Head* unto his *members*; and

and as the *Agent of Christ* doth illuminate, sanctifie and guide the soul. [*He that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him; and he in him : and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the spirit which he hath given us, 1 Joh. 3. 24. That of Eph. 3. 17. may be taken in either, or both senses comprehensively, That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.*]

3. Did you know that Christ is in you by his spirit, it might make every place and condition comfortable to you ! If you are alone, it may rejoyce you to think what company dwelleth continually with you in your hearts. If you are wearied with evil company without, it may comfort you to think that you have better within ; when you have communion with the *Saints*, it is your joy to think that you have nearer communion with the *Lords of Saints*. You may well say with *David*, Psal. 139. 18. [*when I awake I am still with thee.*] Psal. 16. 8. *I have set the Lord always before me : because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

4. Did you know Christ within you, it would much help you in believing what is written of him in the *Gospel*. Though to the ungodly the mysteries of the Kingdom of God do seem incredible : yet when you

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have *experience* of the *power* of it on your *souls*, and find the *Image* of it on your *hearts*, and the *same Christ* within you conforming you to what he commandeth in his word, this will work such a *susableness* to the *Gospel* in your *hearts*, as will make the work of faith more easie. Saith the Apostle; 1 Joh. 4. 14, 16. [*We have seen & do testifie that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world* (there's their outward experience) *And we have known and believed the Love that God hath to us: God is Love; and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him:* (There is their Faith confirmed by their inward evidence: No wonder if they that have God dwelling in them by holy love, do believe the love that God hath to them.) This is the great advantage that the *sanctified* have in the *work* of *faith* above those that much excell them in *disputing*, and are furnished with more *Arguments* for the Christian verity; Christ hath his witness abiding in them. The *fruits of the spirit* bear witness to the *incorruptible seed*, the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever, 1 Pet. 1. 23. The *impress* on the heart bears witness to the *seal* that caused it. And it is not a weak & uneffectual Argument for the Truth of the Gospel that *Believers* use to
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fetch from *within*, when they plead the effects of it on their souls. Labour to know the *Truth* of your *sanctification*, that you may be *confirmed* by it in the *Truth* of the word that *sanctifies* you, *Joh. 17: 17.* and may *rejoice* in him that hath chosen you to *salvation*, through *sanctification* of the *spirit* and *belief* of the *truth*, 2 *Thes. 2. 13.*

5. If you can come to the knowledge of Christ within you, it will be *much the easier* to you to *trust* upon him, and *fly* to him in all your *particular necessities*, and to make use of his *Mediatorship* with holy confidence. When others *flee* from Christ with trembling, and know not whether he will *speak* for them, or *help* them, or have any regard to them, but look at him with strange and doubtful thoughts, it will be otherwise with you that have *assurance* of his continual Love and presence. *Nearness* breedeth *familiarity*, and *overcometh* strangeness: *Familiarity* breedeth *confidence*, and *boldness*: when you find Christ so *neer* you, as to *dwell* within you, and so *particular* and *abundant* in his *Love* to you, as to have given you his *spirit*, and all his *Graces*, it will breed a *sweet delightful boldness*, and make you run to him as your help and refuge, in all your necessities. When

you find the great promise fulfilled to your selves [*I will put my Law in their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*] you will [*have boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus ; by the new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ; And having an high Priest over the house of God, you may draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, (or the conscience of evil) as your bodies are washed (in baptism) with pure water*] Heb. 10. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. [*In Christ we may have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him*] Eph. 3. 12. This intimate acquaintance with our great High Priest, that is passed into the Heavens, and yet abideth and reigneth in our hearts, will encourage us to hold fast our profession, and to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. 4. 14, 16. When by unfeigned Love, we [*know that we are of the truth, and may assure our hearts before him, and our Heart condemneth us not, then we have confidence towards God ; and whatever we ask we receive of him, because we keep*

keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight, 1 Joh. 3. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.

6. When once you know that you have *Christ within you, you may cheerfully proceed in the way of Life*; when doubting Christians that know not whether they are in the way or not, are still *looking behind them*, and spend their time in perplexed fears, lest they are out of the way, and go on with heaviness and trouble, as uncertain whether they may not lose their labour: and are still *questioning their groundwork*, when the building should go on. It is an unspeakable mercy, when a believing Soul is freed from these distracting hindering doubts, and may *bodily and cheerfully hold on his way*, and be *walking or working*, when other men are *fearing and enquiring* of the way; and may with patience and comfort wait for the reward, the crown of life, when others are still questioning whether they were ever regenerate, and whether their hopes have any ground. We may be *stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*, when we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 58. We may then *gird up the loins of the mind*, and in sobriety hope unto the end,

for the grace that is to be brought us, at the Revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. 1. 13.

7. When you are assured that you have Christ within you, it may preserve you from those terrors of soul that affright them that have no such assurance. O he that knoweth what it is to think of the intolerable wrath of God, and says, I fear I am the object of this wrath, and must bear this intolerable load everlastingly,] may know what a mercy it is to be assured of our escape. He that knows what it is to think of Hell, and say, [I know not but those endless flames may be my portion,] will know what a mercy it is to be assured of deliverance, and to be able to say, I know I am saved from the wrath to come, 1 Thes. 1. 10. And that we are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul, Heb. 10. 39. And that God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who dyed for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him:] We may comfort our selves together and edifie one another, when we have this assurance, 1 Thes. 5. 9, 10, 11.

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They that have felt the burden of a *wounded Spirit* and know what it is to feel the *terrors* of the Lord, and to see Hell fire as it were before their eyes, and to be kept waking by the dreadful apprehensions of their danger, & to be pursued daily by an accusing conscience, setting their sins in order before them, and bringing the threatnings of God to their remembrance, these persons will understand that to be *assured* of a *Christ within us*, and consequently of a *Christ* that is *preparing a place* in glory for us, is a mercy that the mind of man is now unable to value according to the tenthousandth part of its worth.

8. Were you assured that *Christ himself is in you*, it would *sweeten all the mercies of your lives* : It would assure you that they are all the pledges of his *love* : And *love* in all, would be the *Kernel* and the *Life* of all : your friends, your health, your wealth, your deliverances, would be steeped in the *dearest Love of Christ*, and have a *spiritual sweetness* in them, when to the worldling they have but a carnal, unwholsome, luscious sweetness; and to the *doubting Christians* they will be turned into *troubles*, while they are questioning the *Love* and *meaning* of the *giver*, and whether they are sent for

good to them, or to aggravate their condemnation; and the *Company* of the *Giver* will advance your estimation of the *gift*. Mean things with the *company* of our *dearest friends* are sweeter than *abundance* in *their absence*. To have money in your purses, and goods in your houses, and books in your studies, and friends in your near and sweet society, are all advanced to the higher value, when you know that you have also *Christ* in your hearts; and that all these are but the attendants of your *Lord*, and the fruits that drop from the *tree of life*, and the tokens of his Love, importing greater things to follow. Whereas in the crowd of all those mercies the soul would be uncomfortable, or worse, if it miss the presence of its dearest friend; and in the midst of all would live but as in a wilderness, and go seeking after Christ with tears, as *Mary* at his Sepulchre, because they had *taken away her Lord* (as she thought) and she *knew not where they had laid him*, Joh. 20. 13. All mercies would be bitter to us, if the presence of Christ do not put into them that special sweetness which is above the estimate of sense.

9. This assurance would do much to preserve you from the temptation of sensual delights.

lights. While you had within you the matter of more excellent contentment, and when you find that these inferiour pleasures are enemies to those which are your happiness and life, you would not be easily taken with the bait. The poorest brutish pleasures are made much of by them that never were acquainted with any better. But after the sweetness of assurance of the Love of God, how little relish is there to be found in the pleasures that are so valued by sensual unbelievers ! Let them take them for me, saith the believing soul ; may I but still have the comforts of the presence of my Lord, how little shall I miss them ? how easily can I spare them ?] Silver will be cast by, if it be set in competition with Gold. The company of common acquaintance may be acceptable, till better and greater come : and then they must give place. Men that are taken up with the pleasing entertainment of Christ within them, can scarce afford any more then a *transient salutation* or observance to those earthly things that are the felicity of the carnal mind, and take up its desires, endeavours and delight ; when the soul is tempted to turn from Christ, to those deceiving vanities that promise him more content and pleasure, the

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comfortable thoughts of the love of Christ, and his abode within us, and our abode with him, do sensibly scatter and confound such temptations. The presence of Christ the great *Reconciler*, doth *reconcile us to our selves*, and make us willing to be *more at home*. He that is out of love with the company that he hath at home, is easily drawn to go abroad: But who can endure to be much abroad, that knoweth of such a guest as *Christ at home*? We shall say as *Peter*, Joh. 6. 68, 69. [*Lord, to whom shall we goe? thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure thou art that Christ the son of the living God.*] And as *Matth.* 7. 4. when he saw him in a little of his Glory [*Master it is good for us to be here.*] And if the riches of the world were offered to draw a soul from Christ, that hath the knowledge of his special love and presence, the tempter would have no better entertainment then *Simon Magus* had with *Peter*, Act. 8. 20. *Their money perish with them that think Christ and his graces to be no better then money.*

10. How easie and sweet would all Gods service be to you, if you were assured that *Christ abideth in you*? What delightful ac-
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cess might you have in prayer, when you know that Christ himself speaks for you ! not as if the *Father himself* were *unwilling* to do us good, but that he will do it in the *name* and for the *sake* and *merits* of his son : which is the meaning of Christ in those words which seem to deny his intercession, Joh. 16. 26. [*At that day ye shall ask in my name ; and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you : for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, &c.*] I appeal to your own hearts, Christians, whether you would not be much more *willing* and *ready* to pray ? and whether prayer would not be a *sweeter* employment to you, if you were sure of Christ's abode within you, and intercession for you, and consequently that all your prayers are graciously accepted of the Lord ! you would not then desire the vain *society* of empty persons ; nor seek for *recreation* in their insipid, frothy, insignificant discourse. The opening of your heart to your heavenly Father, and pleading the merits of his son, in your believing petitions for his saving benefits, would be a more *contenting* kind of *pleasure* to you.

How sweet would *meditation* be to you, if you could still think on Christ and all the riches

riches of his kingdom as *your own* ? could you look up to *Heaven*, and say with grounded confidence, *It is mine, and there I must abide and reign for ever !* could you think of the *heavenly host* as those that must be your *own companions*, and of their *holy employment* as that which must be your *own* for ever, it would make the ascent of your minds to be more frequent, and meditation to be a more pleasant work : were you but assured of your *special interest* in *God*, and that all his attributes are by his *Love* and *Covenant* engaged for your happiness, experience would make you say, [*In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts do delight my soul, Psal. 44. 19. [I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live : I will sing praise to my God while I have my being : My Meditation of him shall be sweet ; I will be glad in the Lord, Psal. 104. 33, 34.* Could you say with full assurance that you are the children of the *Promises*, and that they are all *your own*, how sweet would the reading and meditation on the *holy scriptures* be to you ! How dearly would you love the word ! What a treasure would you judge it ! your delight would be then in the *Law of the Lord*, and you would meditate in it day and night, Psal. 1. 2. To find such grounds

grounds of faith and hope, and riches of consolation in every page, and assuredly to say, *All this is mine*, would make you better understand why David did indite all the 119. Psalm in high commendations of the word of God, and would make you join in his affectionate expressions, Psal. 119. 97, 98, 99. *O how I love thy Law ! it is my Meditation all the day : Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser then mine enemies, for it is ever with me.*

Sermons also would be much sweeter to you, when you could confidently take home the consolatory part, and use our ministry as a help to your faith, and hope, and joy; whereas your *doubts* and *fears* lest you are still unregenerate, will turn all that you hear, or read, or meditate on, into food and fuel for themselves to work upon; and you will gather up all that tends to your *disquietment*, and say, It is your part; and cast away all that tendeth to your *consolation*, and say, it belongeth not to you: and the most comforting passages of the word will be turned into your discomfort: and the promises will seem to you as *none*, while you imagine that they are *none of yours*; And the loss of your *peace* and *comfort* will not be the worst: But this will increase

crease your *backwardness* to *duty*; and when your *delight* in the worship of God is gone, your *inclination* to it will abate, and it will seem a *burden* to you, and be as *meat* to the stomachs of the *sick*, that with the carefullest preparation and much intreaty can hardly be brought to get it down, and can bear but little and that which is suited to their diseased appetites.

The same I may say of the *Sacraments* of the *Lords supper*. How sweet will it be to you, if you are *assured* that the *same Christ* that is *there represented* as broken and bleeding for your sins, doth *dwell within you* by his spirit! What wellcome entertainment would you expect and find, if you knew that you brought the *feast* and the *Master* of the feast with you in your hearts; and had there entirely entertained him, with whom you expect communion in the sacrament! How boldly and comfortably would your hungry souls then feed upon him! with what refreshing acts of faith would you there take the sealed promise and pardon of your sins! whereas when you come in fears and doubting, and must take the *body* and *blood* of Christ in their *Representations*, with your hand and mouth; while you know not whether you receive
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him with the *heart*, and whether you have any special interest in him, O what a damp it casteth on the soul! how it stifleth its hopes and joys, and turneth the Sacrament which is appointed for their comfort, into their greater trouble! It hath many a time grieved me to observe that no ordinance doth cast many upright souls into greater perplexities, and discouragements, and distresses, then the Lords Supper; because they come to it with *double reverence*, and by the *doubtings* of their *title*, and questioning their preparedness, and by their *fears* of *eating and drinking unworthily*, their souls are utterly discomposed with perplexing passions, and turned from the pleasant exercise of faith, and the delightful intercourse that they should have with God; and they are distempered and put out of relish to all the sweetness of the Gospel: And then they are frightened from the Sacrament by such sad experiences, and dare come thither no more, for fear of eating judgement to themselves. And should not Christians labour to remove the cause of such miserable distracting fears, that so much wrong both Christ and them, and to recover their well-grounded peace and comfort!

11. Your *Love to God*, which is the Heart and Life of the new creature, doth so much depend upon your *knowledge of his love to you*, as should make you much more desirous of such a *knowledge*. *Love is the end of faith*; and *faith the way to Love*. So much of *Love* as is in every duty, so much *holiness* is in it, and no more. *Love is the sum of the commandments*. It is the *fulfilling of the Law*, Rom. 13. 10. Mat. 22. 37. Mark. 12. 33. Though God loved us *first*, as *purposing* our good, before we loved him, 1 Joh. 4. 9. 10. And we therefore *Love him*, because he *first loved us*, v. 19. Yet doth he *Love us by complacency and acceptance*, because we love the Father and the son: Joh. 16. 27. [For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.] And what will more effectually kindle in you the fervent *Love of Christ*; then to know that he loveth you, and dwelleth in you? All this is exprest by Christ himself, in Joh. 14. 20. 21, 22, 23. [At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you: He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him,

and will manifest myself unto him ——— If a man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.]

1 Cor. 8. 3. If any man love God, the same is known of him] with a knowledge of special Love and approbation: This is no disparagement to faith, whose nature and use is to work by Love, Gal. 5. 6. What a man Loveth, such he is. The Love is the man. Our Love is judged by our Life, as the cause by the effect : but the Life is judged by the Love, as the fruits by the tree, the effects by the cause. [*Mores autem nostri non ex eo ; quod quisque novit, sed ex eo quod diligit, dijudicari solent nec faciunt bonos vel malos mores, nisi boni vel mali amores.*] saith Augustine ; that is [Our manners are not used to be judged of according to that which every man knoweth, but according to that which he loveth : It is only good or evil love, that maketh good or evil manners.] If Plato could say (as Augustine citeth him, lib. 8. de Civit. Dei) *Hoc est Philosophari, scilicet Deum amare* : To be a Philosopher, is to Love God.] Much more should we say, *Hoc est Christianum agere*, this is the doctrine and the work of a Christian, even the Love of God. Indeed it is the work of

the Redeemer, to recover the heart of man to God, and to bring us to Love him by representing him to us as the most amiable suitable object of our Love : And the perfection of Love, is Heaven it self. [*O jugum sancti amoris, (inq. Bernard.) quam dulciter capis, gloriose laqueas, suaviter premis, delectanter oneras, fortiter stringis, prudenter erudis!*] that is [*The yoke of holy Love, O how sweetly dost thou surprize ? how gloriously dost thou inthrall ? how pleasantly dost thou press ? how delightfully dost thou load ? how strongly dost thou bind ? how prudently dost thou instruct ?*] [*O felix amor ex quo oritur strenuitas morum, puritas affectionum, subtilitas intellectuum, desideriorum sanctitas, operum claritas, virtutum facunditas, meritorum dignitas, premiorum sublimitas*] [*O happy Love, from which ariseth the strength of manners, the purity of affections, the subtilty of intellects, the sanctity of desires, the excellency of works, the fruitfulness of virtues, the dignity of deserts the sublimity of the reward!*] I appeal to your own consciences Christians; would you not think it a foretaste of Heaven upon earth, if you could but Love God as much as you desire ? would any kind of life that you can imagine, be
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so desirable and delightful to you! Would any thing be more acceptable unto God! And on the contrary, a soul without the Love of God, is worse then a Corpse without a soul. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha, 1 Cor. 16. 22.

And do I need to tell you what a powerful incentive it is to Love, to know that you are beloved? It will make Christ much more dear to you, to know how dear you are to him. What is said of affective Love in us, may partly be said of attractive Love in Christ. Eccles. 8. 7. *Many waters cannot quench Love, neither can the floods drown it: no riches can purchase what it can attract;* when you find that he hath ^{set} you as a seal upon his arm and heart, v. 6. and that you are dear to him as the apple of his eye; what holy flames will this kindle in your breast! If it be almost impossible with your equals upon earth not to Love them that Love you (which Christ telleth you that even Publicans will do, Matth. 5. 46.) how much more should the Love of Christ constrain us abundantly to Love him, when being infinitely above us, his Love descendeth, that ours may ascend! His Love puts forth the hand from heaven, to fetch us up.

O Christians, you little know how Satan wrongeth you, by drawing you to *deny*, or *doubt* of the special Love of God. How can you *Love him* that you apprehend to be your *emie*, and to *intend your ruine*? Doubtless not so *easily* as if you *know him* to be your *friend*. In reason is there any likelier way to draw you to *hate God*, then to draw you to *believe that he hateth you*? Can your *thoughts* be *pleasant* of him? or your *speeches* of him *sweet*? or can you *attend him*, or draw near him with *delight*, while you think he *hateth you*, and hath decreed your damnation? you may *fear him*, as he is a terrible *avenger*; and you may confess his judgements to be just: but can you amicably *embrace the consuming fire* and love to *dwell with the everlasting burnings*!

O therefore as ever you would have the Love of God to *animate*, and *sanctifie*, and *delight* your souls, study the greatness of his Love to you, and labour with all possible speed and diligence, to find that Christ by his spirit is *within you*. It is the *whole work of sanctification* that Satan would destroy or weaken by your doubts: And it is the *whole work of sanctification* that by Love would be promoted, if you *knew* your
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your interest in the Love of Christ.

12. It is the knowledge of Christ dwelling in you, and so of the special Love of God, that must acquaint you with a life of holy Thankfulness and praise. These highest and most acceptable duties, will be out of your reach if Satan can hide from you that mercy which must be the chiefest matter of your Thanksgiving. Will that soul be in tune for the high Praises of the Lord, that thinks he meaneth to use him as an enemy? Can you look for any cheerful thanksgiving from him that looks to lie in hell? will he not rather cry with David, Psal. 6. 5. [In death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks? Psal. 30. 9, What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?] shall the damned praise thee, or shall they give thee thanks that must be scorched with the flames of thine indignation? Can you expect that Joy should be in their hearts, or cheerfulness in their countenances, or praises in their mouths, that think they are Reprobated to the fire of Hell? Undoubtedly Satan is not ignorant, that this is the way to deprive God of the Service which is most acceptable to him, and you of the pleasure

tures of so sweet a life. And therefore he that envyeth both, will do his worst to damp your spirits, and breed uncomfortable doubts and fears, and wrongful suspicions in your minds. Whereas the Knowledge of your interest in Christ, would be a continual storehouse of thanksgiving and praise, and teach your hearts as well as your tongues, to say with David, [*Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.* —

Be glad in the Lord, and rejoyce ye Righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart. | Psal. 32. 1, 2, 11. *Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name: Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, Who healeth all thy diseases: Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies,* Psal. 103. 1, 2, 3, 4.] *O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me: O Lord thou hast brought up my soul from the grave; thou hast kept me alive that I should not go down to the pit; sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his*

his holiness : for his anger endureth but for a moment : in his favour is life, Psal. 30. 2, 3, 4, 5. Thanksgiving would be the very pulse and breath of your assurance of Christ dwelling in you. You would say with Paul, Eph. 1. 3, 4. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in celestials in Christ : According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him in Love : having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved ; In whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace, wherewith he hath abounded towards us, &c.*] Thus faith and assurance, as they have an unspeakable store to work upon, so it is natural to them to expatiate in the praise of our Redeemer, and to delight in amplifications and commemorations of the ways of grace. Just so doth Peter begin his first Epistle [*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the*

resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time, wherein ye greatly rejoyce, &c.

No wonder if the Heirs of Heaven be inclined to the language and the work of Heaven. I think there are few of you that would not rejoyce, and by your speech, and countenance express your joy, if you had assurance but of the dignities and dominions of this world. And can he choose but express his joy and Thankfulness, that hath assurance of the crown of life? What fragrant thoughts should possess that mind that knoweth it self to be possessed by the Spirit of the living God! How thankfull will he be that knows he hath Christ and Heaven to be thankfull for! What sweet delights should fill up the hours of that mans life, that knows the son of God liveth in him, and that he shall live in Joy with Christ for ever! How gladly will he be exercised in the praises of his Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, that knows it must be his work for ever? No wonder if this joy be a stranger to their hearts, that
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are strangers to Christ, or strangers to their *interest* in his love : No wonder if they have no *hearts* for these *celestial* works, that have no *part* in the *celestial* inheritance, or that *know not* that they have any part therein. How can they joyfully give thanks for that which they *know not* that they *have* or ever *shall have*, or have any *probability* to attain!

But to that man that is *assured* of Christ *within him*, Heaven and Earth and all their store do offer themselves as the matter of his *Thanks*, and do furnish him with provisions to feed his *Praises*. What a shame is it that an assured heir of Heaven should be scant and barren in *comfort* to himself, or in *Thanks* and *Praise* to Jesus Christ, when he hath so full a heap of *Love* and *mercy* to fetch his *motives* from, and hath *two worlds* to furnish him with the preciouslest materials ; and hath no less then *Infinite goodness* even God himself, to be the subject of his *Praise* ! [*O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good : because his mercy endureth for ever : (what ever others do) Let Israel say, let the house of Aaron say, let them that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth for ever, Psal. 118. 1, 2, 3, 4. The knowledge of our Interest fitteth us for his Praise. [Psal. 118. 28. [Thou art my God*

God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.] Psal. 116. 16, 17. [O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds; I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord?] His Praise is for [the Congregation of his Saints, Psal. 141. 1, 2. Let Israel rejoyce in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King] Psal. 148. 13, 14. [Let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone is excellent: his glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of his people; the Praise of all his Saints, even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him.] Psal. 132. 16. I will also cloath his priests with salvation, and his Saints shall shout aloud for joy] Praise is a work so proper for the Saints, and Thanksgiving must be fed with the knowledge of your mercies, that Satan well knoweth, what he shall get by it, and what you will lose, if he can but hide your mercies from you. The height of his malice is against the Lord, and the next is against you: and how can he shew it more then by drawing you to rob God of his Thanks and Praise, when he hath blessed and enriched

riched you with the chiefest of his mercies ! Labour therefore Christians to know that you have that *Grace* that may be the *Matter* and *Cause* of so sweet and acceptable an employment as the *Praises* of your *Lord*.

13. Moreover, you should consider that without the knowledge of your interest in Christ, you cannot live to the honour of your Redeemer, in such a measure as the Gospel doth require. The excellency of Gospel mercies will be veiled and obscured by you, and will not be revealed and honoured by your lives. Your low and poor dejected spirits, will be a dishonour to the faith and hope of the Saints, and to the Glorious inheritance of which you have so full a prospect in the promises. If you take the son of a Prince in his infancy, and educate him as the son of a plowman, he will not live to the honour of his birth, which he is not acquainted with. The heirs of Heaven that know not themselves to be such, may live like the heirs of Heaven as to uprightness and humility ; but not in the triumphant joy, nor in the courageous boldness, which becometh a Believer. What an injury and dishonour is to our Redeemer, that when he hath done and suffered so much to make

us happy, we should walk as heavily as if he had done *nothing* for us at all ! And when he hath so fully secured us of *everlasting happiness*, and told us of it so expressly that our *joy may be full*, we should live as if the *Gospel were not the Gospel*, and such things had never been *promised* or *revealed* ! When Heaven is the Object, and the promise of God is the groundwork of our faith, we should live above all earthly things, as having the honours and pleasures of the world under our feet, accounting all as *loss and dung* for the excellency of the knowledge of *Jesus Christ*, Phil. 3. 8. whom we should love though we have not seen him; in whom though now we see him not, yet believing we should rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory ; as those that must receive the end of their faith, the salvation of our souls] 1 Pet. 1. 8, 9. And how can we do this, if we are still questioning the *Love of Christ*, or our interest in it!

Believers should with undaunted resolution charge through the armies of temptation, and conquer difficulties, and suffer for the name of Christ with joy ; accounting it a *blessed thing* to be persecuted for *righteousness sake*, because that theirs is
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the kingdom of Heaven : Because of the greatness of the Reward, they should rejoyce and be exceeding glad, Matth. 5. 10, 12. And how can they do this, that believe not that the Reward and Kingdom will be theirs!

The *joys of faith*, and confidence on the promise and strength of Christ, should overcome all inordinate fears of man, [*For he hath said, I will never fail thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me, Heb. 13. 5. 6. And how can we do this, while we are questioning our part in the Christ and promise that we should thus boldly trust upon!*

14. Lastly consider, that the *knowledge of your part in Christ, may make all sufferings easie to you.* You will be so much satisfied in God your portion, as will abate the desires, and drown the joys and sorrows of the world. You will judge the sufferings of this present time unworthy to be compared to the Glory, that shall be revealed in us Rom. 8. 18. You will choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches then the treasures of the world,

as having respect to the recompence of reward, Heb. 11. 25, 26. All this must be done, and will be done by true believers, that have an assurance of their own sincerity ; They must and will forsake all and take up the Cross and follow Christ, in hope of a Reward in Heaven, as it is offered them in the Gospel, when they know their special interest in it. For these are Christs terms which he imposeth on all that will be his Disciples, *Luk.* 14. 33. & 18. 22, 24, 25. But you may certainly perceive that it will be much more *easy* to part with all, and *undergoe* and *do* all this, when we have the great encouragement of our *assured interest*, then when we have no more but the *common offer*. To instance in some particulars.

1. Do you live where *serious Godliness* is derided, and you cannot obey the word of God, and seek first the Kingdom of God, and its righteousness, without being made the *common scorn*, and the daily jest and by-word of the company? Let it be so : If you know that you have Christ within you, and are secured of the *everlasting joys*, will you feel, will you regard such things as these ? shall the *jest* of a distracted miserable fool, abate the joy of your
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assured happiness ? Princes and noblemen will not forsake their *dominions* or *Lord-ships*, nor cast away the *esteem* and *comfort* of all they have, because the poor do ordinarily reproach them as Proud, unmerciful oppressors. They think they may bear the words of the miserable, while they have the the pleasure of prosperity: And shall not we give losers leave to talke ? We will not be *mockt* out of the *comfort* of our *health* or *wealth*, our *habitations* or our *friends* : and shall we be *mockt* out of the *comfort* of *Christ* and of the presence of the comforter himself ! If they that go *naked* deride you for having *cloaths* ; and they that are out of doors in the *cold* and *rain*, deride you that are *warm* and *dry* withthin ; or they that are *sick* deride you for being *well*, this will but make you more sensible of your felicity, and pittie them that have added such *folly* to their *wants* ; so will it *increase* the sense of your felicity ; to find that you are possessed of so unspeakable a mercy, which others have not so far tasted of as to know its worth. If you have the *feast*, you may bear the words of *famished unhappy* souls, that speak against it because they taste it not : If you are in your *Fathers arms*, you may bear the scorns of

of such as stand without the doors.

2. If you have the *contradictions* and *opposition* of the *ignorant* or *malicious*, *speaking evil of things they know not*, and *persuading you from the ways of righteousness*, how *easily* may all this be born while you have *Christ within you* to strengthen and encourage you! Had you but *his example* before you, who is *the author and finisher of your faith*, who for the joy that was set before him *endured the Cross*, *despising the shame*, and *endured such contradiction of sinners against himself*; it should keep you from being *weary and fainting in your minds*: Heb. 12. 2, 3. But when you have *his presence*, *his spirit*, and *his help*, how much should it corroborate and confirm you!

3. How *easily* may you bear the *slanders of your own* or the *Gospels enemies*, as long as you are *sure of your interest in Christ*? How *easily* may you suffer them to call you by their own names, *pestilent fellows* and *movers of sedition among the People*, *ringleaders of a Sect*, *prophaners of the Temple*, as Paul was called, *Act. 24. 5, 6.* as long as you have *Christ within you*, that was called *Beelzebub* for you sakes, *Math. 10. 25.* Your *Judge* that must finally decide the case, is your *dearest friend*, and *dwelleth in you*:

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It is *he* that will justify you ; who is *he* that condemneth you ? *Rom.* 8. 33, 34. His approbation is your life and comfort. How inconsiderable is it as to your own felicity , what mortal worms shall say or think of you ? What if they call you all that is naught, and stain your names , and obscure your innocence, and make others believe the falsest accusations, that Satan can use their tongues to utter of you ? You have enough against all this *within you* : What if you go for hypocrites, or factious, or what malignity can call you , until the day of Judgement ? As long as you have so good security of being then fully cleared of all , and your righteousness vindicated by your Judge ; how easily may you now bear the slanders of men ; that prove themselves wicked , by falsely affirming it of you ? You can endure to be called *Poor*, so you be not poor ; and to be called *sick*, as long as you are well. And you may well endure to be called *Proud*, while you are *Humble* ; and *factious*, while you are the *Lovers* of *Unity* and *Peace* ; or *Hypocrites*, while you are *sincere*. How boldly may you say with the Prophet, *Isaiah* 50. 7, 8, 9. [*The Lord God will help me : therefore shall I not be confounded : therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not*

be ashamed : He is near that justifieth me ;
 Who will contend with me ? let us stand toge-
 ther : Who is mine adversary ? Let him come
 near to me : Behold the Lord God will help me ;
 who is he that shall condemn me ? Lo, they shall
 all wax old as a garment : the moth shall eat
 them up.]

Had you but Pauls assurance and experi-
 ence of Christ dwelling in you , you might
 imitate him in a holy contempt of all the
 slanders and revilings of the world , 1 Cor.
 4. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. [For I think that God
 hath set forth us the Apostles last , as it were
 men appointed to death : For we are made a
 spectacle to the world , and to Angels , and to
 men : We are fools for Christs sake , but ye are
 wise in Christ : We are weak , but ye are
 strong : Ye are honourable , but we are despi-
 sed : Even unto this present hour , we both
 hunger , and thirst , and are naked , and are
 buffeted , and have no certain dwelling place ;
 and labour working with our own hands : be-
 ing reviled , we bless ; being persecuted , we
 suffer it : being defamed , we intreate : We are
 made as the filth of the world , and are the off-
 scouring of all things unto this day.] Thus
 may we do and suffer all things through
 Christ that strengtheneth us , Phil. 4. 13.
 What matter is it what men call us , if God
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call us his children, and friends, and Christ be not ashamed to call us Brethren? With us it will be a very small thing to be judged of man, while we know the Lord that must judge us, is on our side, 1 Cor. 4. 3, 4. It lyeth not on our hands to justify our selves: It is Christ that hath undertaken to answer for us; and made it the work of his office to justify us: and to him we may boldly and comfortably leave it: and let all the accusers prepare their charge, and deal with him, and do their worst.

4. How easily may you bear imprisonment, banishment, or other persecution, as long as you are assured of the Love of Christ? Can you fear to dwell where Christ dwells with you? If he will go with you through fire and water, what need you fear? Those owning appropriating words; will make us venture upon the greatest perils [*Fear not, for I have Redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine: When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt— For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy one of Israel, thy Saviour.*] Who would not with Peter cast himself into the Sea, or walk with confi-

dence upon the *waters*, if *Christ* be there and call us to him? *Matth.* 14. 28, 29. *John* 21. 7.

The eleventh chapter to the Hebrews doth recapitulate the victories of faith, and shew us what the *Hope of unseen things* can cause Believers patiently to undergo. How cheerfully will he endure the *fonleſt way*, that is *aſſured* to come ſafe to *ſuch a home*? What will a man ſtick at that knows he is following *Chriſt* to Heaven; and knoweth that he *ſhall reign with him*, when he hath *ſuffered with him*? *2 Tim.* 2. 12. Who wil reſuſe *blood letting*, that is aſſured beforehand that it ſhall procure his health? He is *unworthy* of *Chriſt*, and of ſalvation, that thinks any thing in the world too good to loſe for them, *Matth.* 10. 37. What matter is it whether Death find us in *honour* or *diſhonour*, in our own *Countrey* or in another, at *liberty* or in *prison*, ſo we are ſure it find us not in a *ſtate of death*. Who would not rather *paſs to Glory* by as ſtraight a way as *John Baptiſt*, *Stephen*, or other *Martyrs* did, then with their perſecutors to proſper in the way to *miſery*? Who can for ſhame repine at the loſs of *temporal commodities*, that is ſecured of the *eternal Joyes*? If *aſſurance* of the *Love of God*, would not embolden

bolden you to *patient suffering*, and to lay down *life and all* for Christ, what do you think should ever do it?

But when you are *afraid* lest *death* will turn you into *Hell*, What wonder if you timorously draw back? When you know not whether ever you shall have *any better*, no wonder if you are loth to part with the *seeming happiness* which you have. Those doubts and fears *enfeeble* the soul, and spoil you of that valour that becomes a souldier of Christ.

5. All *personal crosses* in your *estates*, your *families*, your *friends*, your *health*, will be easily born, if you are once assured of your *salvation*. To a man that is passing into *Heaven*, all these are almost *inconsiderable things*. What is *Lazarus* the worse now for his sores or rags? Or what is the Rich man the better for his *sumptuous attire* and fare? *Luke 16*. Whether you be *poor* or *rich*, *sick* or *sound*, whether you are *used kindly* or *unkindly* in the world, are questions of so small importance, that you are not much concerned in the answer of them: But whether you have *Christ within you*, or be *reprobates*; whether you are the *heirs of the promise*, or are *under the curse*, are questions of everlasting consequence.

6. Lastly, you may comfortably receive the sentence of death, when once you are assured of the *Life of Grace*, and that you have escaped everlasting death. Though nature will be still *averse* to a dissolution, yet faith will make you cheerfully submit, *desiring to depart and be with Christ*, as the best condition for you, *Phil. 1. 23*. When you know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, you have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; you will then groan earnestly, *desiring to be cloathed upon with your house which is from heaven: not to be uncloathed*, (for the union of soul and body, is the constitution of the man, which nature cannot but desire) *but to be cloathed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life*: This God doth work you for, who giveth you the earnest of the spirit; therefore as men that know while you are at home in the body, you are absent from the Lord, and that walk by faith, and not by sight, you would be alwaies confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord, *2 Cor. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8*.

Though it be troublesome to remove your dwelling, yet you would not stick upon the trouble, if you were sure to change a cottage for
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for a *Court* : nor would you refuse to cross the Seas, to change a *prison* for a *Kingdom*. The *holy desires* of Believers, do prepare them for a *safe death* ; but it is the *assurance* of their *future happiness*, or the *believing expectation* of it, that must prepare them for a death that is *safe and comfortable*. The Death of the *Presumptuous* may be *quiet*, but not *safe* : The Death of *doubting troubled Believers* may be *safe*, but not *quiet* : The Death of the *ungodly*, that have *awakened undeceived consciences*, is neither *safe nor quiet* : But the Death of *strong Believers* that have attained *assurance*, is *both*. And he that findeth *Christ within him*, may know that when he *dyeth*, he shall be *with Christ* : His *dwelling in us by faith*, by *Love*, and by his *Spirit*, is a pledge that we shall *dwell with him*. *Christ within us*, will certainly carry us unto *Christ above us*. Let Socinians question the happiness of such departed souls, or doubt whether they be in heaven before the resurrection ; I am sure that they are *with Christ*, as the fore-cited places shew, 2 *Cor.* 5. 7, 8. and *Phil.* 1. 23. and many other : We are *following him*, that when he had *conquered Death*, and *went before us*, did send that message to his doubting troubled Disciples, (which is to me so full of

sweetness, that methinks I can scarce too oft recite it) *John 20. 17.* [*Go to my Brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and to your God.*] O piercing, melting words, which methinks do write themselves upon my heart, when ever I read them with attention and consideration ! Know once that you are *his Brethren*, and that *his Father* is *your Father*, and *his God* is *your God*, and that he is *ascended* and *glorified* in *your nature* ; and then how can you be *unwilling* to be dismissed from the bondage of this flesh, and *be with Christ* ! For in *his Fathers house* are *many mansions* : and he is gone before to prepare a place for us : and will come again and receive us unto himself, that where he is, there we may be also, *John 14. 2, 3.* And that this is *his will* for all his servants, he hath declared in that comfortable promise, (which also I have found so full of sweetness, that I value it above all the riches of the world) *John 12. 26.* [*If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be : If any man serve me, him will my Father honour*] The Spirit of Christ within you, is the earnest of all this : Be assured of your Faith, and Hope, and Love, and you may be assured to possess the

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Good believed and Hoped for and Loved. The incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever, of which you are new born (1 Pet. 1. 23.) doth tend to the incorruptible crown (1 Pet. 5. 4.) even the Crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge will give to all that love his appearing, 2 Tim. 4. 8. And so shall we ever be with the Lord, as the Apostle comfortably speaks, 1 Thes. 4. 17. and seasonably annexeth the use of such a cordial, vers. 18. [wherefore comfort one another with these words.]

Whether we are to die by the decay of nature, or by the storm of any violent disease, or by the hand of persecutors or any other instruments of Satan, the difference is small: They are but several ways of landing at the shore of happiness, which we were making towards, through all the duties and difficulties of our lives. May we by any Death be sent to Christ, let them domineer a while that stay behind, and are conquerors and happy in their dream: we shall neither miss nor desire their felicity. May I die assured of the Love of God, how little regardable is it whether I be poor or rich till then? or in what manner Death shall do its execution? and how little cause have
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blessed souls, to envie them that are left on earth, in a quiet and prosperous passage to damnation?

And what an ease and pleasure is this to a *mans mind through all his life*, to be able with well-grounded comfort, *to think of death?* What *cares* can *convex* him that hath secured his everlasting state? What *losses* should *afflict* him that is sure he shall not lose his soul, and is sure to gain eternal life? What *fears* should *disquiet* him that is sure to escape the wrath of God? What *wants* should *trouble* him that knoweth he is an heir of Heaven? Why should the indignation or threatnings of man, be any temptation to turn him out of the way of duty, or dismay his mind, who knoweth that they can but *kill the body*, and dismiss the soul into his blessed presence, whom it loveth and laboureth and longs to see? what should inordinately *grieve* that man that is certain of *eternal joy*? What else should he *thirst* for, that hath *in him the well of living waters springing up to everlasting life*? Job. 4. 14. And what should deprive that man of *comfort*, that knoweth he hath the *Comforter within him*, and shall be for ever comforted with his *masters joy*? And what should break the *Peace and Patience* of him that is assured
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of *Everlasting Rest* ? If the *assurance* of a *happy death* cannot make it *welcome*, and cannot make *affliction easie*, and fill our lives with the *joies of Hope*, I know not what can do it.

But alas for those poor souls that know not whither death will send them, or at least have not good grounds of hope, what wonder if *through the fear of death they be all their life time subject unto bondage* ! Heb. 2. 14. Methinks in the midst of their wealth and pleasure, they should not be so stupid as to forget the millions that are gone before them, that lately were as jovial and secure as they ; and how short their dreaming feast will be ; Methinks all the beauty of their fleshly Idols, should be blasted with those nipping frosts and storms, that in their serious forethoughts, come in upon them, from the black and dreadful regions of death ! Methinks at any time it should damp their mirth, and allay the ebullition of their phrenetick blood, to remember [*For all this I must die*] and it may be *this night*, that the fool must deliver up his soul ; and then whose shall those things be which he hath provided ! Luk. 12. 19, 20. Then who shall be the Lord, and who the Knight or Gentleman ? and who shall wear

wear the *gay attire*? and who shall *domineer*, and say, *Our will shall be done*, and *thus we will have it*? Then where is the pleasure of lust, and merry company, and meat drink and sports? Methinks, Solomons *memento*, Eccles. 11. 9. should bring them to themselves [*Rejoyce O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgement*] And as the sound of these words [*I must shortly die*] methinks, should be always in your ears; so in reason, the Question [*whether must I then go*] should be always as it were *before your eyes*, till your souls have received a satisfactory answer to it. O what an amazing dreadful thing it is, when an unsanctified unprepared soul must say [*I must depart from earth, but I know not whither! I know not whether unto Heaven or Hell; Here I am now, but where must I be for ever!*] When men believe that their *next habitation* must be *everlasting*, methinks, the Question [*whether must I goe*] should be day and night upon their minds, till they can say upon good grounds, [*I shall go to the blessed presence of the Lord:*

Lord:] O had you but the hearts of men within you, methinks the sense of this one Question, [Whither must I go when I leave the flesh?] should so possess you, that it should give your souls no rest, till you were able to say, [We shall be with Christ, because he dwelleth in us here, and hath sealed us and given us the earnest of his spirit : or at least, till you have good hopes of this, and have done your best to make it sure.

And thus I have told you of how great importance it is to *believers*, to attain assurance of the love of God, and to know that *Christ abideth in them*. And now I think you will confess, I have proved the necessity of *Self-knowledge*, both to the *unregenerate*, and the *regenerate*, though in several degrees : and having opened the disease, and shewed you the need of a remedy, I am next to direct you in the application for the cure.

I Doubt not but there are many of the Hearers that by this time, are desirous to be instructed, how this *self knowledge* may be attained: For whose satisfaction, and for the reducing of all that hath been spoken into practise, I shall next acquaint you with the *Hinderances* of *Self-knowledge* (the removing of them being not the least point in the cure,) and with the *Positive Directions* to be practised for the attainment of it: And because the *Hinderances* and *Helps* are *contrary*, I shall open both together as we go on.

The *Hinderances* of *self knowledge* are some of them *without us*, and some *within us*; and so must be the *Helps*.

I. The *external Hinderances* are these.

1. *The failing of Ministers in their part of the work, through unskilfulness or unfaithfulness*, is a great cause that so many are ignorant of themselves. They are the *Lights* of the world: and if they are eclipsed, or put under a bushell; if they are darkened by the snuff of their own corruptions; or if they feed not their light by the oile of diligent studies and other endeavours; or if they will not go along

along with men into the dark and unknown corners of the heart, what wonder if mens hearts remain in darkness, when those that *by office* are appointed to afford them Light, do fail them? It is not a general dull discourse, or critical observations upon words, or the subtil decision of some nice and curious questions of the schools, (though these may be useful to their proper ends,) nor is it a neat and well composed speech about some other distant matters, that is like to acquaint a sinner with himself. How many sermons may we hear (that to others ends are not unprofitable) that are levelled at some mark or other, that is very far from the *Hearers hearts*, and therefore are never like to convince them, or prick them, or open and convert them? And if our congregations were in such a case, as that they *needed* no closer quickening work, such preaching might be born with and commended: But when so many usually sit before us, that must shortly dye, and are unprepared, and that are condemned by the Law of God, and must be pardoned or finally condemned: that must be saved from their sins, that they may be saved from everlasting misery, I think it is time for us to talk to them of such things as

most

most concern them ; and that in such a matter as may most effectually convince, awake and change them. When we come to them on their *sick-beds*, we talk not then to them of distant or impertinent things : of words, or forms, or parties, or by-opinions, but of the state of their souls, and their appearing before the Lord, and how they may be ready, that death may be both safe and comfortable to them : (though a superstitious miserable fellow, that knoweth no better things himself, may talk to the sick of beads, and reliëts, and of being on this side or that, for this ceremony or the other, and may think to conjure the unholy spirit out of him, by some affected words of devotions uttered from a graceless senseless heart, or to command him out by Papal authority, as if they would charm his soul to heaven, by saying over some lifeless forms, and using the *Gospel* as a *spell* ; Yet Ministers indeed that know themselves what Faith and what Repentance is, and what it is to be regenerate, and to be prepared to die, do know that they have other work to do,) The *Gospel* offereth men their *Choice*, whether they will have *Holiness* or *sin* ; and be ruled by *Christ*, or by their *fleshy lusts* ; and so whether

ther they will have *spiritual*, or *carnal*, *eternal* or *transitory* Joys. And our work is to perswade them to make that *choice* which will be their Happiness if we can prevail, and which eternal Joy depends upon : whether we come to them in *sickness* or in *health*, *this is our business* with them. A man that is ready to be *drowned*, is not at *leisure* for a *song* or *dance* ; And a man that is ready to be *damned*, methinks should not find himself at *leisure* to hear a man shew his wit and reading only, if not his folly and malice against a life of Holiness ; Nor should you think that suitable to such mens case, that doth not evidently tend to save them. But, alas, how often have we heard such sermons, as tend more to *diversion* than *direction* ; to fill their minds with other matters, and find men something else to think on, lest they should study themselves, and know their misery ! And whereas there may be so much ingenuity in the sinner as to perceive that the discourse of idle tongues, or the reading of a Romance is unsuitable to one in his condition ; and therefore will not by such *toyes* as these, be called off from the consideration of his *ways* ; A preacher that seems to *speak religiously*, by a *sapeless*,
D dry,

dry, impertinent discourse thats called a *sermon*, may more *plausibly* and *easily* divert him : And his conscience will more quietly suffer him to be taken off the necessary care of his salvation, by something that is *like it*, and pretends to *do the work as well*, then by the *grosser* avocations, or the scorns of fools : And he will more tamely be turned from *Religion*, by something that is called *Religion*, and which he hopes may serve the turn, then by open wickedness, or impious defiance of God and Reason. But how oft do we hear applauded Sermons, which force us in compassion to mens souls to think [*O what is all this to the opening a sinners heart unto himself, & shewing him his unregenerate state ?* Whats this to the conviction of a self-deluding soul, that is passing unto Hell with the confident expectations of Heaven ! To the opening of mens eyes, and turning them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God ! whats *this* to shew men their *undone* condition, and the absolute necessity of Christ and of renewing grace ! what is in this to lead men up from earth to heaven, and to acquaint them with the unseen world, and to help them to the life of faith and love, and to the mortifying and the pardon of their sins ? How little

skil have many miserable preachers, in the searching of the heart, and helping men to know themselves, whether Christ be in them, or whether they be reprobates? and how little care and diligence is used by them to call men to the tryal, and help them in the examining and judging of themselves, as if it were a work of no necessity ! They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace, saith the Lord, Jer. 6. 14. And Ezek. 13. 10, 11, 12. Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying Peace and there was no peace, and one built up a wall, and lo others dawbed it with untempered mortar, say to them that dawb it with untempered mortar that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shewre, and ye O great hailstones, shall fall, and a stormy wind shall rend it : Lo when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the dawbing wherewith ye dawbed it ?]

It is a plain and terrible passage, Prov. 24. 24. He that saith to the wicked, Thou art Righteous, him shall the people curse ; natives shall abhor him,] Such injustice in a Judge or witnesses is odious, that determine but in order to temporal rewards or punishments : (Lev. 19. 15. Prov. 18. 5.

& 28. 21.) But in a *messenger* that professeth to speak to men in the *name* of God, and in the *stead* of Jesus Christ, when the determination hath respect to the *consciences* of men, and to their *endless* joy or *torment*, how odious and horrid a crime must it be esteemed to perswade the *wicked* that he is *Righteous*, or to speak that which *tendeth* to *perswade* him of it though not in open plain expressions ! what *perfidious* dealing is this against the Holy God ! what an abuse of our Redeemer, that his pretended *messengers* shall make him seem to judge *clean contrary* to his *Holiness*, and to his *Law*, and to the *Judgement* which indeed he passeth and will pass on all that live and die *unsanctified* ! What vile deceit, and cruelty against the souls of men, are such Preachers guilty of, that would make them believe that all is *well* with them, or that their state is *safe* or *tolerable*, till they must *find* it otherwise to their *woe* ! when *diseased* souls have but a short and limited time allowed them for their cure, that a man shall come to them, as in the *name* of their *Physition*, and tell them that they are *pretty well*, and need not make so much ado about the business, and thus keep them from their *only help* till it be *too late* ! what
Shame,

shame, what punishment can be too great for such a wretch? when the neglect and making light of Christ and his salvation, is the common road to Hell, *Heb. 2. 3.*

Matth. 22. 5. and most men perish because they value not and use not the necessary means of their recovery; for a man in the name of a minister of the Gospel, to cheat them into such undervaluings and neglects, as are like to prove their condemnation: what is this but to play the Minister of Satan, and to do his work, in the name and garb of a minister of Christ? It is damnable treachery against Christ and against the peoples souls to hide their misery when it is your office to reveal it; and to let people deceive themselves in the matters of Salvation, and not to labour diligently to undeceive them; and to see them live upon presumption and ungrounded hopes, and not to labour with faithful plainness to acquaint them with their need of better hopes. But some go further, and more openly act the part of Satan, by reproaching the most faithful servants of the Lord, and labouring to bring the people into a conceit that seriousness and carefulness in the matters of God and our salvation, are but hypocrisie and unnecessary strictness: And in their company

and converse they put so much countenance on the ungodly, and cast so much secret or open scorn upon those that would live according to the Scriptures, as hardeneth multitudes in their impenitency. O dreadful reckoning to these unfaithful shepherds, when they must answer for the ruine of their miserable flocks ! how great will *their damnation* be, which must be aggravated by the damnation of so many others ! When the question is, *How come so many souls to perish ?* the answer must be, Because they let light by Christ and Holiness which should have saved them : *But what made them set light by Christ and Holiness ?* It was their deceitful confidence that they had so much part in Christ and holiness, as would suffice to save them, though indeed they were un sanctified strangers unto both. They were not practically acquainted with their necessities. *But how came they to continue thus ignorant of themselves till it was too late ?* Because they had teachers that kept them strange to the nature of true holiness, and did not labour publickly and privately to convince them of their undone condition, and to drive them to Christ that by him they might have life. Woe to such Teachers that ever they were born,
that

that must then be found under the guilt of such perfidiousness & cruelty ! Had they ever felt themselves, what ^{it} is ~~is~~ to be pursued by the Law and conscience, and with broken hearts to cast themselves on Christ as their only hope and refuge, and what it is to be pardoned, and saved by him from the wrath of God, and what it is to be sanctified and to be sensible of all his Love, they would take another course with sinners, and talke of sin, and Christ, and holiness at other rates, and not deceive their people with themselves.

Direct. 1. My first *Direction* therefore to you is in order to the knowledge of yourselves, that if it be possible, you will live under a faithful, soul-searching, skilful Pastor, and that you will make use of his publike and personal help, to bring you and keep you in continual acquaintance with yourselves.

As there is a double use of Physicians ; one *General*, to teach men the common Principles of Physick, and read them *Lectures* of the nature of diseases, and their causes and remedies ; and the other *particular*, to apply these common precepts to each individual person as they need ; So is there a double use of ministers of the Gospel ; One

to deliver *publikely* the *common doctrines* of Christianity concerning mans *sin* and *miser*y, and the *remedy*, &c. and the other to help people in the *personal application* of all this to themselves. And they that take up only with the former, deprive themselves of half the benefit of the ministry.

1. In *publike* how *skilful* and *diligent* should we be, in opening the hearts of sinners to themselves ! The Pulpit is but our candlestick, from which we should diffuse the *holy Light* into all the Assembly : Not speaking the *same things* of all that are before us, as if it were our work *only to trouble men*, or *only to comfort them* : but as the *same Light* will shew every man the things which he beholdeth in *their varieties* and *differences* ; (we see by the same sun a man to be a man, and a beast to be a beast, and a bird to be a bird ;) so the *same word* of truth which we deliver, must be so *discovering* and *discriminating*, as to manifest the *ungodly* to be *ungodly*, and the *carnal* to be *carnal*, the *worldling* to be a *worldling* ; the *hypocrite* to be an *hypocrite*, and the enemies of holiness to be as they are ; and the *sincere* to be *sincere* ; and the *renewed soul* to be indeed *renewed*.

renewed. The same light must shew the excellency of sanctification, and the filthiness of sin: the glory of the Image of Christ, and the deformity of that spiritual death which is its privation. It must shew the Righteous to be more excellent than his neighbour, Prov. 12, 26. and help men to discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not, Mal. 3. 18. we must not be like the miserable ungodly preachers, that cannot describe the state of grace with clearness and feelingly, because they never knew it: or that dare not discover the unsanctified lest they detect themselves, nor judge them according to their office, lest they condemn themselves; and that preach to the ungodly as if all were well with them; and they dare not awaken the consciences of others, lest they should awaken and affright their own: and therefore are ready to scorn at all distinguishing preachers, and to take the discovery of regeneration to be but the boasting of hypocrisie, as if he that would differ from the most, or did pretend to the special priviledges of the Saints, did but as the Pharise, thank God that he is not like other men; or say, Stand by, I am more holy then thou: And if these preachers could

could prove that *all men shall be saved* that will but say that they are Christians, they might then have hope of being saved themselves, without that serious piety which they so distaste. No wonder therefore if they preach in the language of *Corah*, Numb. 16. 3. *Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the Congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them : wherefore then lift you up your selves above the Congregation of the Lord !*] But the Lord saith [*If thou takest forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth : let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them,*] Jer. 15. 19. If you love not differencing preaching, make no difference from the true members of Christ by your hypocrisie or ungodly living ; be such as they, and we shall not difference you from them. Read but the first Psalm, and the fifteenth Psalm, and the third of *John*, and the eighth to the Romans, and the first Epistle of *John*, and then tell me whether the Scripture be not a differencing word, condemning some, and justifying others, and shewing the true state of the difference betwixt them. What is there no difference between the heirs of Heaven and Hell ? Or is the difference no more then that one hath

hath the name of a Christian, and not the other? or that one had the hap to be born where the Gospel was Received, and Christianity was the Religion of the Countrey, and the other the unhappiness to be born where it was not known? O no, when the dreadful differencing day is come, men shall find that there was another kind of difference, between the way of Life and of death: When many shall say, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works! to whom Christ will prove, I never knew you: Depart from me ye that work iniquity, Matth. 7. 22, 23. When many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven; but the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into utter darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth] Matth. 8. 11, 12. what a difference will appear between those that now converse together, and sit here in the same seats, between whom the world that judgeth by the outside, discerns but little or no difference? When those things shall be executed that are written in Matth. 25, and 2 Thes. 1. O what a difference will

will then appear ! when of those that were in the same Church, the same house, the same shop, the same bed, *One shall be taken, and the other left :* and the felicity that was hid in the seed of Grace, shall shine forth to the astonishment of the world, in the fulness of eternal Glory !

I know Preachers are ordinarily hated that thus difference between the Godly and ungodly ; the very names of difference are matter of scorn to guilty souls, because they imply the matter of *their terror*. I have oft noted this with admiration, in the success of Christs own doctrine upon the Jews, *Luk. 4. 18, 19, 22.* when he had so preached the Gospel, as that he had the testimony of the multitude that *wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth*, yet some were cavilling and believed not, and *v. 25, 26, 27.* he saith [*Itell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the Heaven was shut up three years, &c. But unto none of them, was Elias sent save unto Sarepta a City of Sidon, to a woman that was a widow : And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elizeus the prophet : and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian :*] But how was this difference-
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ing doctrine of Christ entertained, by the Jews ? It is said v. 28. 29. *All they in the Synagogue when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the City, and led him to the brow of the hill whereon their City was built, that they might cast him down headlong*] Read it and consider, *what moved these men to so much rage against Christ himself for preaching this doctrine, which restrained the fruit of the Gospel to a few ; and then you will not wonder, if those preachers that imitate Christ in this, be used no better then their Master.*

But let Ministers know that *this is their duty*, to shew every man *himself, his deeds, and state* as indeed they are : And let Christians *choose and love* such Ministers. Choose not the Glass that makes you *fairest*, but which is *truest*, and representeth you to *your selves* as God accounteth you, whether he do it with more *eloquence* or less; with smoother or with rougher *language* ; hear him if you may, that will best acquaint you with the truth of your condition, and choose not those that speak not to the heart.

2. And when you have *heard* the best, the clearest, the most searching Preacher, do
not

not think that *now you can do all the rest of the work your selves* : and that you have *no further* need of help : But make use of their *more particular personal advice* ; not *meddlesly*, but in these following cases.

1. In case that after *your most diligent self-examination*, you are yet at *uncertainty* and *doubt*, whether you are *truly sanctified* or *not*. The settling of your states for all eternity, and the well-grounding of your Hopes and Comforts, is a matter of such unspeakable moment, as that you should not remain in *careless, negligent uncertainty*, while God hath provided you any further means that may be used for assurance. Yea if you *were not* troubled with *doubting*, yet if you have opportunity of opening your Evidences to a judicious faithful Minister or friend, I think it may be worth your labour, for the *Confirmation* of the peace and comforts which you have. You cannot make *too sure* of everlasting Happiness.

2. And not only in the first settling of your Peace, but also when any notable assault or dangerous temptation shall afterward shake it, which you cannot overcome without assistance, it is reasonable

able to betake your selves to the Physician.

3. And also in case of any dangerous *lapse or declining* that hath brought you into a state of *darkness*. The *sick and wounded must* have help : *They* are not sufficient for themselves.

4. Also in case of any *particular corruption, or temptation*, your particular sinful inclinations may (cautiously) be opened to a faithful Guide, that by his prudent and lively counsel you may be strengthened.

If you say, *To what end do Ministers preach to me, and why do I hear them opening the natures of Grace and of Hypocrisie, if I cannot judge of my self by the doctrine which they preach ?* I answer, 1. You may and must judge your selves by the *publike common helps*, as far as you are able : But a *personal applying help*, added unto this, is a *further* advantage. And humility should teach you, not to think better of your understandings than there is cause ; nor to think you are so wise as to need but *one* help, when God hath provided you *two* : or that you need but the *lesser*, when he hath provided you a *greater*. And doth not your own experience convince you ?
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Do you not find that after the best publike preaching you are yet *in doubt*, and at a *loss* about your spiritual state, and therefore that you have need of further help?

2. I further answer you : There is so great a *diversity* of particular *circumstances* in the cases of particular persons, that a great deal of help is necessary to most, to pass a right *judgement*, when they do understand both the *Law*, and the *fact*. Will you think it enough that you have the *statutes* of the Land, and the *Law-books* to judge of all your own cases by ? Or will you not think that you have also need of the Counsel of the wisest *Lawyer* (in your weightiest cases) to help you to judge of your *cause* by the particular application of the Law to it ? So in Physick, who is so foolish, as to think that by the help of the most learned *Book*, or approved *Receipts* he is able to be his own Physician, without any more particular advice ? You must be long in studying Law or Physick before you can understand them so well as those that have made them the study and business of their lives. It is not *having* or *reading* a *Book* only, or hearing a *Lecture* of them, that can make you as understanding as the masters of the Profession ;

Profession; and also to have all passages *at hand* that must be observed in the judging of your Cause. So is it in matters of the *soul*. When *you* have heard much, and understand much, you cannot in modesty think that all the sense of Scripture, about those points, is known as exactly to you, as to your most judicious Teachers; and that you are as able at once to see all the passages of the *word*, and of the *fact*, as may enable you to pass so clear a judgement on it. Perhaps you will say, that you know your own hearts and actions better than they do. I answer, You do so, or should do so, as to the *matter of fact*: and it is *you* that *they* must know it from: And yet when you have done, you may not be able to judge of your *State* by those *acts* which you say you know: *You* must shew the *Lawyer* all your *evidences*: *He* cannot see them, till *you* shew them him: and yet *when* he seeth them, he can judge of them whether they are good or bad, and of your title by them, better than *you* can that have the keeping of them; because he better understands the *Law*: The *Physicion* *feeleth* not *your pain*, nor *knoweth* it till *you tell* it him: And yet when *you* have *told* it him, he knows bet-

The Mischief of Self-ignorance,

ter then *you* what it *signifieth*, and whether it *tendeth*, and whether be curable or not, and what must cure it.

But perhaps you will say, that *when you have gone to Ministers, and opened your case to them, they cannot resolve you, but you are still in doubt.*

I answer, 1. Perhaps when they have resolved them, yet you would not be resolved. Have they not told you the truth and you would not believe it? Or directed you to Remedies which you would not use? They cannot when they have told you the truth, *compell* you to believe it; nor when they have told you what will do the cure, they cannot *make* you use it if you refuse.

2. And what if the *nature* of the disease be *obstinate*, and will not be cured easily and at once, but with *time* and *diligence* and *patience*? Will you therefore think the *means* are *vain*? Must you at once, or in a short time, be resolved, and delivered from all your doubts, about your title to *eternal life*, or else will you cast off *all advice*? Should you do so by your *bodies*, you may know what were like to be the issue: Should your *children* learn thus of their *teachers*, they were like to make unhappy Schollars.

Schollars. As you will not have done with *Christ*, if he cure you not at *once*, nor give over *praying* if you have not all your *desires* at *once* (if you love your selves) So you must not have done with the *Counsel* of your *Guides*, if they satisfy not your doubts at *once* : As you cease not *hearing* them in *publike*, though you have still your *doubtings* ; so why should you cease *advising* with them *personally* upon that account ? Use Gods means, and be thankful, if *by degrees* they do the cure, and prevail at *last*.

Object. *But I find it is God only that can speak peace ; and therefore it is vain to hang on men.*

Answer, God speaketh by his *word* and *spirit* : His *word* is to be *delivered*, *expounded*, and *applied* to you by his *Ministers* : If therefore you will have it *from God*, you must not refuse his *own* appointed ordinary *means*. The *spirit* comforteth by the *promise* : As in *Conversion* God useth not to do it by the *spirit*, *without*, but *in*, and *by* the *Ministry of the word* ; so also in all our *directions*, and *satisfaction* and *comfort* afterwards. As he that will run from the *Ministry of the word*, because it is *God* that must *convert*, doth indeed run from
Ec 2 God,

God, and is not like to be converted : so is it in point of assurance, and consolation. The Teachers of the Church [are to be accounted of as the Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. 4. 1. by whom the people have believed, 1 Cor. 3. 5. not having dominion over their faith, but being helpers of their joy, 2 Cor. 1. 24. who are comforted in all their tribulations, that they might be able to comfort them that are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith they themselves are comforted of God, v. 4. They are to be faithful and wise stewards, whom the Lord maketh Rulers over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season, Luk. 12. 42. Thus Christ hath given authority to his servants, and appointed to every man his work, Mark. 13. 34. and given Pastors and Teachers to his Church; for the perfecting of the Saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, to a perfect man, Eph. 4. 11, 12, 13. These therefore being Christs officers, and this their appointed work, we must receive so much of Gods mercies by their hands, as belongeth to their office to administer. [If there be a messenger,

senger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness ; then God is gracious unto him , and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit ; I have found a ransom : Job. 33.

23, 24.

So that you see it is Gods way to shew to man his uprightness, and to speak peace to souls by his messengers and interpreters that are fitted and authorized there-to.

Object. But it is but few that are able thus to discuss the case of unsettled doubting souls, and to give them clear and safe directions, that may save them both from presumption and despair : In many places the Ministers are senseless of these things, and unacquainted with the concernments and works of conscience, and have nothing to say to us, unless to deride us as scrupulous and precise, and bid us not trouble our heads about such matters, seeing God is merciful, and Christ dyed for sinners : They will discourse with us long enough about news, or worldly businesses, or opinions, or controversies ; but when we open to them the state of our souls, and desire their advice for the making our calling and election sure, they have no sense or favour of such discourse :

And many ministers that are truly Conscientious, are yet so unskilful and so weak, that we have no encouragement to acquaint them with our state.

To this I answer : It cannot be denyed but all this is too true ; and it is matter of lamentation , and must send us to God with the old petition which Christ himself hath put into our mouths, Math. 9. 37, 38. [*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few : Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*]

But consider that this is no wonder, or unusual thing : For all this, there is no nation under heaven that hath more able faithful Ministers of Christ, then are in these Nations. Alas how much of the Church is guided by meer ignorant Readers ! and how much by superstitious deceivers ! Did you know the case of the poor Christians in the Ethiopian, the Greek, and the Roman Churches, you would bless God that it is so well with us : Even when the Church was in a narrower room, yet God complained, Jer. 12. 10. [*Many Pastors have destroyed my vineyard : they have trodden my Portion under foot : they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness : They*
have

have made it desolate : and being desolate it mourneth unto me :] And Jer. 23. 1, 2. [*Woe be to the Pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my Pasture, saith the Lord : therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the Pastors that feed my people : Ye have scattered my flock and driven them away, and have not visited them : behold I will visit on you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord.] And I will set up shepherds over them that shall feed them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed] Then was the Church fain to take up this lamentation, Jer. 10. 19, 20. 21. *Woe is me, my hurt ! for my wound is grievous : But I said, Truly this is a grief, and I must bear it : my tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken : my children are gone forth of me, and they are not : there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains : For the Pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord : therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.]**

But the voice of healing mercy saith [*Only acknowledge thine iniquity, &c. Turn O back sliding children, &c. and I will give you Pastors according to my heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and*

understanding,] Jer. 3. 13, 14, 15.

You see in all other professions (that require not supernatural illumination) there are but *few* that attain to excellency : It is but in *few* that Nature layeth the foundation ~~or~~ or giveth that capacity, to be excellent, which Grace doth elevate and improve.

Take therefore the advice of the *ablest* you can get : If most *Physicians* are weak and ignorant, do not therefore cast off all, nor yet cast your selves upon one that is like to kill you, because he is your *neighbour*. I will not perswade you to go *always* to the *Minister of your Parish*, to open the case of your souls, be he *fit* or *unfit* : but to the *fittest* that you can have access to : The Papists themselves will give men leave to choose others for their *Confessors*. Where there is most of the *heavenly illumination*, and holy skill in the matters of the soul ; where there is the *soundest* and *exactest judgement*, joyned with *experience* and *tender compassion*, and *faithful plainness*, and *cautelous secrecie*, there open your hearts if you have opportunity, and take the help of such faithful counsellors to acquaint you with your selves.

Object.

Object. But such Ministers being few, and having more of greater work then they can turn them to, are not to be spoken with as oft as may necessity requireth help.

Ans. Use then the best that are at leisure; And it is not only Ministers that you must use, but any other Christian friend, that hath such abilities and qualifications, as fit them to assist you; *Whosoever* hath the *Light*, refuse not to come to it; Gods gifts and graces may be helpful to you in a Parent, a husband, a neighbour, and not only in a Minister.

Quest. But how far may a dark and doubting person take up and rest in the judgement of a Minister or of others, about the state of his soul, when he is not satisfied himself?

Ans. This Question is of very great use, and therefore the more carefully to be resolved; I shall answer it therefore, 1. *Negatively*, and 2. *Affirmatively*.

1. No mans judgement of your state is to be taken as *absolutely infallible* or *divine*: nor is man to be believed as God is with a *divine belief*: when they tell you, that [*If you are regenerate, you are justified*] then they do but tell you what God hath

hath told you, and therefore this is to be taken as of *infallible certainty*, not as it is *their word*, but as it is *Gods* : so also when they tell you, that [*if you are unconverted you are not forgiven*] But when they tell you, that [*you are converted or unconverted, pardoned or unpardoned,*] this judgement is not to be taken as *infallible* or *Divine*.

2. For the bare matter of *fact* (*whether you Repent or not ; whether you had rather be Holy or unholy, &c.*) there is no Minister that can know your Heart so well as you your selves may know it : except in case when *Melancholy* or *passion*, or a *weakness of understanding* on one side, or a *wilfulness of presumption* on the other side, doth make men judge of their *own* condition quite contrary to the *evidence* that appeareth in their *lives* to others.

3. It is not safe to rest on the judgement of one that is either an *enemy* or *stranger* to the workings of a careful troubled soul ; or of one that is drunk with any *heresie*, or fond of any *private opinion* of his *own*, and layeth out his *zeal* to form people into his *opinion*, as if the life of *Religion* lay in that : Nor yet of a *weak unskilful* man.

4. It

4. It is not safe for you to rest much in the Judgement of one that *knows you not*, and is not acquainted (by himself, or by the report of others, or some good evidence) of the bent and manner of your lives, but must judge only by the *present expressions* of your own mouths.

5. It is not safe for you to rest on the judgement of any *one singular person*, when the judgement of *most of your judicious acquaintance* is contrary to it. So much for the *Negative*,

2. *Affirmatively* I answer, 1. By a *Divine faith* you are bound to believe all the *promises of Scripture* that your *Pastor* (or any other) shall acquaint you with.

2. As a *Disciple of Christ*, you are bound to *Learn* the meaning of *those Promises* (and other passages of the Scripture) from your *Teachers* daily authorized to instruct you : And with such a *Humane belief*, as a *schollar* oweth to his *Teacher* in *Arts or Sciences*, you are bound to *Believe* your *Teachers* concerning the meaning of the promises, in cases wherein you are *unable your selves* to understand the word by its *proper light and evidence*, as well as they ; and in case you see no *evidence of falshood* in their exposition, nor have

have any *special reason* to distrust them. He that will believe nothing that his *Teacher* telleth him in order to his own *understanding*, shall never understand by *Teaching* : If you know as much as he already, you need no *Teacher* : If you do not, you must believe him, or else you can never learn of him. But this is not to take him for *omniscient*, or *infallible* in himself, but to credit him as a *man*.

3. You are bound, when he judgeth of your *particular case*, upon your opening to him the *matter of fact*, to allow him so much credit as is due to the proportion of his *understanding*. You tell him how you feel your hearts affected, and what the *actions* of your lives have been; when you have told it him, he judgeth by *Gods word*, whether this be a state of saving grace which you describe, or not; if upon *much stronger parts*, or *longer study*, and more *experience*, he know more of the *meaning* of the *word*, and of the nature of *grace*, and so be abler to judge than you, modesty requireth that you do in that *measure* submit your understanding unto his, and believe him according to the measure of his skill, upon supposition that you deceive him not in your information. Even as you will believe a
Lawyer

Lawyer about your *Title* to your *lands*, when you have shewed him your *evidence*; or a *Physician* about your *disease*, when you have told him what you feel (as I said before.)

4. You are bound to add also all *that credit* that his *Honesty* and *fidelity* requireth, if he be a godly man, unwilling to deceive you.

5. And you are bound to add so *much Belief* as in the case is due to a *stander by* that is out of the *dust*, and is not *blinded* by *self-love*, or *partiality*, or *passions*, or any *selfish byas*, as most men are to themselves.

6. If you are *darkened by melancholly*, or any other weakening *diltemper*, that maketh you uncapable of judging for your selves, you are bound to allow another so *much credit*, as the advantage of his *sounder understanding*, and more *composed judgement* doth require. If every *Child*, or *sick person* will *believe* no body that doth not say as they, their *self-conceitedness* and their *distrust* of others will be their wrong.

7. In the *manner of reception*, you are bound to do all this with such a *submission* as belongeth to an *officer of Christ*: Not that you are to *believe* any *falsehood*, that he bringeth

bringeth you, and fathereth upon Christ; nor to put out your own eyes, and see with his: But to learn of him to understand your selves, and receive what he bringeth you according to his office: As a child is bound to submit to any Tutor or Teacher that the Parents shall set over him. The *same truth* must be received as from a *double obligation*, when besides its *proper evidence*, it is delivered by a *messenger of Christ*.

8. You may yet *more boldly* and confidently give credit to the judgement of such a Minister of Christ, when he *not singular*, but speaks according to the *concurrent judgement* of the *generality of able experienced men*. Modesty will forbid you to think your selves wiser then all the able Ministers about you.

9. You have the less reason to suspect his judgement, when you may be sure that he is *not perverted* by any *self-interest*, or *self-respect*, and bawketh not the truth for fear of *displeasing you*, or bringing any *discredit* or *suffering on himself*.

10. Lastly, when *all these things concur*, you may with the *greater confidence* rest upon his Judgement. And though still he is but an *imperfect man*, and no *absolute certainty* of your *estate* can be had from his
bare

bare judgement (though from his *doctrine* and the *Effects* and *Signs* there may,) yet such a Judgement, should weigh very much with you, to the raising of *fear* and *care* in the *ungodly*, and for the *quieting* of a troubled soul.

Let us a little now *apply* this *Direction* to both parties. Beloved Hearers, if any of you can look before you to eternity, and do not with awakened thoughts conclude, that all probable means should be used in time, to make sure of your final Justification at the dreadful day of God, that man wants either the *faith of a Christian*, or the *feeling of a considerate man*. Are you all desirous to be *sure before hand*, what sentence shall pass upon you *then*, or are you not? If you *are*, come on, and let me make a motion that you cannot reasonably refuse: The business is of unspeakable consequence: To be *deceived*, may be to be *undone* for ever: Will you advise with those that *God hath appointed* to give you advice in so great a case? Well then! will you go and faithfully open your state (supposing you have the need before expressed) to some *able faithful Minister* of Christ? Not to an *ignorant*, or a *carnal, unexperienced* man; but unto once that is skilled in spiritual affairs, and
that

that will be faithful to you, and deal with that serious gravity and reverence as be-
 seems him that is helping to prepare a soul
 for the bar of Christ : Will you (if you
 never did it) tell him, whether ever you
 were *convinced* of your *sin* and *misery* ;
 and whether ever you saw the *need* of
 Christ ? and whether you have *loathed*
your selves for your iniquities ? and *fled*
to Christ as your only refuge from the
 wrath of God ? and have *turned away* with
resolution from your former ungodly
 careless life ? and have *changed* your
company, your *business*, and your *de-*
lights ? Whether you make it your
chief business to please God, and to *save your*
souls ? and resolve to take up with the *hopes*
 of *Heaven* as your *only portion*,, and not to
 hazzard it, for any *worldly interest*, or *fleshly*
pleasure whatsoever ? whether in your eyes
 a *vile person* be *contemned*, but you love and
 honour them that fear the Lord ? Tell these
 and other such particulars of your state
 to your faithful Pastors ; Answer them to
 these, and such like questions, and then
 take their judgement (with the cautions
 before expressed) of your spiritual state.
 Heare what they will tell you of it. Might
 not this course convince thee of thy
 miserable

miserable state, that never hadst any such evidences as these to shew ! and might it not awaken thee in time, to bethink thee of a safer course ! Go to any faithful Minister in the world and tell him the *plain truth*, that yet thou art a *secret fornicator* or *drunkard*, or *pot-companion*, or *flesh-pleaser* in some sensual way ; or if thou sinnest not so grossly, that yet thou art a *formal hypocrite*, and hast a *secret enmity* to those that are *most seriously Religious*, and live the most heavenly lives, and that thou art thy self a stranger to all the fore said passages of sanctification ; and I dare assure thee that he will tell thee if thou art thus indeed thou art in the *gall of bitterness* & the *bond of iniquity* ; and must be speedily *renewed* and *sanctified* and *justified*, or thou art undone for ever. I tell thee, there is not a man that is worthy the name of a Minister in all the world, but will pass this judgement on the condition of thy soul. And yet wilt thou bear it out with a senseless heart, a seared conscience, and a brazen face, and still live as carelessly as if all were well with thee / what is thy soul of no more worth ? Is it so small a matter with thee what becometh of thee ? Or is the judgement of able faithful Ministers in the way of their *own office*, of no

more regard with thee? What not when *all* the foresaid requisites concur ! They shew thee the plain word of God against thee ; and that his *Threatning* contains the *virtual sentence* of thy *condemnation* ; They are by *office* the *Interpreters* of the *Law of God* to you ; It hath been the *study* of their *lives* : The matters in question are such as they have had *experience* of in *themselves* and *others* : They have judged as hardly of *themselves* and of their *own case*, as now they do of *yours* when *theirs* was the *same* as *yours* is now. Do they pronounce you *miserable* as being strangers to the spirit of Christ ? So they *did* by *themselves* when they saw their sin : and therefore they are *impartial* : They have had before them multitudes, (*alastoo many*) in *your case* : And you will regard the judgement of a *Physicion* that hath had *many hundreds* in hand that had the *same disease* as you. They are men that are not *willing* to *deceive* you. They *deny themselves* in telling you of your danger : They know that *smoother words* would *please* you better : And they have *natures* that *desire* mens *love* and *favour*, rather than *displeasure* and *ill will*. They are more *impartial* than you are, and have not your *self-interest* and *passion* to
blind

blind them : They are not abused in their judgement by the temptations of evil company, or of worldly fleshly things as you are ; For these temptations more hinder us from judging *our selves* then *other men*. They are the *messengers of Christ* appointed to give to each their portion : and should not their judgement be regarded in the *business* committed to their trust ? And it is not one man or two, or a hundred only, that are of this mind : Open thy case to *all the judicious faithful Ministers* in the land, or in the world, and open it truly, and they will all tell thee that if thou die without converting sanctifying grace, thou art lost for ever ; and that all the world cannot save thee from the everlasting wrath of God. Try as many of them as you will, and see if *all* of them tell you not the *same thing*. And is all this *nothing* to thee, presumptuous sinner, that in the judgement of all the most able faithful Ministers of Christ, thy soul should be in a state of death ? Art thou wiser then all the best and wisest, in the matters of their own profession ? If *all the Physicians* in the countrey should tell thee, that thou hast a disease that will certainly be thy death, unless thou take some *one effectual medicine* in time, I think thou wouldest not

5 *The Mischief of Self-ignorance,*

blight their judgement, and say, They are too censorious, that thou knowest thy condition better then they ! I think it would affright thee to seek after the remedy. And why should not the judgement of the *faithful Ministers*, about the state of thy soul, be so far regarded, as to awaken thee to a more careful enquiry, and stir up a *preventing and remedying* fear ? If the judgement of Christs officers be not regardable, then there is no matter of terror in *excommunication* ; nor no matter of comfort in *Ministerial Absolution*.

O the madness of a hardened sinner ! that when he sheweth by the *fruits* of an *ungodly life* that he is a stranger to sanctification, and liveth in the sins which the Scripture threatneth damnation to, and hath no evidence of true conversion to shew, will yet be confident of pardon and salvation, let God and all his Ministers say what they will against it ! and will rather be *offended* with his spiritual Physicians, for telling him of the danger of his state, and rail at them as if they did him wrong, then he will see his danger and prevent his misery ! Let such a one hear the word of God, if he have eares to hear, Deut. 29. 19, 20, 21 :
[*Left there should be among you a root that beareth*

beareth gall and wormwood, and it come to pass when he beareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smite against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven, & the Lord shall separate him to evil, &c.]

And on the other side, Is there any soul among you that in doubts, and trouble, hath opened his case to the faithful Ministers of Christ, and their judgement is, that your state is safe? Is this the judgement, not only of the weakest, but the wisest; not only of strangers, but of those that know you best; not only of one or two, but of all or most of the judicious Ministers, that ever you opened you case to? even of the most honest and impartial, that would not flatter you nor deceive you? Yea and perhaps, when desertions, or Melancholy, or passion, or ignorance do make you unfit to judge of your selves: And doth all this seem nothing to you? or a small matter? It is not nothing: It is not small: I confess it is no ground of cer-

tainty : They are but *men* : It is a *humane*
testimony : But yet it is a testimony, that
 may weigh down *many* of *your own surmi-*
ses, and take off much of your *distressing*
fears; and may give much *ease* to troubled
 souls, while they are seeking after *surer*
knowledge : It is a ground of comfort, not
 to be *despised*, or made light of : Till you
 can come to see your *evidences your selves*,
 and to be acquainted with the *indwelling*
spirit as your *witness*, you may much quiet
 your minds, and take much comfort, in
 this *judgement* and *witness* of the *servants*
of the Lord, that have a *spirit of discerning*,
 and have that *grace* which acquainteth them
 with the *nature of grace* in others, and that
 have been *long exercised* in the *discerning*
 of mens states : It is *possible* an *Hypocrite*
 (especially one that wilfully giveth them a
 false relation of himself) may deceive
 them : but it is *Probable* that it is not one
 of many they are deceived in, when they
 know or have a good description of the
 Person. If in a Law suit *all the ablest Law-*
yers tell you that your cause is good ; it is
possible they may be deceived, but it is not
likely ; If in a *Feaver* *all the ablest Physi-*
cions tell you, the *danger is past*, it is *possible*
 yet that they may be *all deceived* : But yet

I think you would take *some comfort* in such a testimony ; so should you here : Though the Judgement of Ministers be not *infallible*, it may be much better then your *own*, though about *your selves* : and it may be set against the *jealousies* and *fears* of a disquiet soul, and against abundance of the *molesting suggestions* of the accuser.

I do not by all this draw you to lay too much on man ; I advance them not too high, and make them not *Lords of your faith*, but *helpers of your joy*. I draw you not to any *deceitful course* ; nor into any way of *danger* to your *souls*. I bid you not *fully and finally* rest in the judgement of *man* : I bid you not *neglect any means* to come to *fuller knowledge*, and *certainity* of your own *sincerity* : I bid you not forbear *any means* that tend to the *getting of true grace* : If you *have it* and *know it not*, the *same means* (for the most part) may *increase it*, which you use to get it : And if you *have it not*, when it is *thought* you *have it*, the *means* may work it, that that are intended to *increase it*. Do all that you can to Repent, Believe, and Love God, and Live to him, whether you ever did these before, or not : - But yet let the judgement of your faithful Pastors, the

officers and experienced servants of the Lord, *keep of despondency and despair* that would *dijable* you from the *use of means*, and would weaken your hands, and make you sit down in unprofitable complaints, and give up all as hopeless. Let their judgement quiet you in the way of duty; Lean on them in the dark, till you come into the light. Yea be glad that you have so much encouragement and hope, from those that are by Christ appointed to subserve the spirit in the *comforting* as well as the *sanctifying* work, and to *shew to man his uprightness*, and to *say to the Righteous, It shall be well with him*, Isa. 3. 10. I tell you, all the wealth of the world, is not worth even *this much* ground of comfort: Live upon *this much*, till by diligent attendance and waiting on the spirit of grace and comfort, you can get higher.

2. **T**HE second extrinsical Hinderance of self-knowledge, is, *Prosperity* and the *Flattery* that usually attendeth it. The one *disposeth* men to be deceived, and the other putteth the hood over their eyes, and tells them the falsehoods which deceive them. When

When men prosper in the world, their minds are lifted up with their estates ; and they can hardly believe that they are indeed so *ill* while they feel themselves so *well*; and that so much misery is joyned with so much content and pleasure. They cannot taste the bitterness of their sin, and Gods displeasure, while the sweetness of worldly delights & honours is in their mouths. The Rich man in *Luk.* 16. its like would have given a man but an unwelcome entertainment, that had come to tell him that within a few days or years he should lie in hell, and not be able to get a drop of water to cool his tongue ! What need we doubt of that, when his five Brethren that he left on earth behind him, would not be perswaded (to know their danger of those flames, and to use the necessary means to scape them) though one had come to them from the dead ! *Luk.* 16. 31. You plead against their *feeling*, when you tell them of their misery, when they *feel* prosperity : Their fleshly appetite and sense, which is in them the reigning faculty, doth tell them they are well and happy : and that which must confute this, and tell them they are miserable, must be an inward sense of the sin and diseases of their souls, and a fore-seeing

seeing Faith that must look before them unto eternity, and fetch its proofs from the word of God, and fetch its motives from another world: And alas, they have no such *inward* sense, nor no such *Faith* as can prevail against their their sensual *feeling*. And therefore it is a matter of lamentable difficulty to make a prospering sinner well acquainted with his misery. He is drunken with fleshly pleasures and contentments: And when the drink is in a mans head, you can hardly make him sensible of his misery, though he be a beggar, or a prisoner, or were to die within a week. The Devil is therefore willing to reach his servants as full a cup of prosperity as he can, that their drunkenness may keep them from the true use of their reason; For if they once come to themselves, they will come home to God. When misery brought the Prodigal to himself, he resolveth presently of going to his Father, *Luk. 15*. The bustle of his worldly business, and the chattering vain discourse that is in his ears, and the mirth and sport that takes him up, will not allow him so much of reason as seriously to consider of his souls condition. Alas, when *poor men*, that must labour all day for food, and
rayment

ayment, can find *some time* for serious converse with God and with their Consciences; the *Great ones* of the world have no such leisure: How many are going uppace towards Hell, and say they cannot have while to bethink themselves what way they are in, or whether it is that they are going! That which they have all their time for, they have no time for, because they have no hearts for it. Prosperity doth so please their flesh, that they can give no heed to conscience or to reason: It doth so charm their minds, and enslave their wills to sense and appetite, that they cannot abide to be so Melancholy as to prepare for death and judgement, or to consider seriously how this will relish with them at the end: nor scare to remember that they *are men*, that should rule their senses, and be ruled by God, and that have another life to live.

And as Prosperity in it self is so great a Hinderance to the knowledge of your selves, so *Flatterers* that are the flies of summer, are always ready to blow upon the prosperous, and increase the danger. What miserable men are extolled as wise and virtuous and Religious, if they be but Rich and Great! Their vices are masked, or
extenuated

extenuated, and made but little humane frailties : Though they were swinish gluttons or drunkards, or filthy fornicators, or meer flesh-pleasing sensual bruits, that waste most of their lives in ease and sports, and eating and drinking and such delights ; yet with their flatterers all these shall go for *prudent, pious, worthy* persons, if they can but seek when they have done, to mock God and their consciences with some lip-service and lifeless carcass of Religion. O happy men if *God* would judge of them as their *flatterers* do ; and would make as small a matter of their wickedness, and as great a matter of their out-side Hypocritical heartless worship ! But they must be greater then men or Angels, and higher then either earth or Heaven, before God will flatter them. When they can make *him* afraid of their high looks or threatenings, or when they can ~~put~~ ^{him} put in Hope of rising by their preferment, then they may look that he should comply with their parasites, and complement with his *enemies*, and *justify* the *ungodly* ; but not till then. O did they consider, how little *flattery* doth secure them, and how little the Judge of all the world regards their worldly pompe and splendor, yea how greatly
their

their greatness doth aggravate their sin and misery, they would frown their flatterers out of doors, and call for plain and faithful dealers. Of all the miseries of worldly greatness, this is not the least, that usually such want the necessary blessing of a glass that will truly shew them their faces; of a friend at hand that will deal plainly, and justly with their souls. *Who* tells them plainly of the odiousness, and bitter fruits of sin? and of the wrath of God and endless misery? How few such true and faithful friends have they? and what wonder! when it is a carnal inducement that draweth men to follow them: It is their wealth and honour, and their power to do men good or hurt in outward things, that makes *their friends*: They are attended by these flies and wasps, because they carry the honeypot which they love: And God saith to his followers, *Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world: If any man Love the world, the Love of the Father is not in him, 1 Joh. 2. 15.* And it is for Love of worldly things (even the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and pride of life, &c. which are not of the Father, but of the world, 1 *Joh. 2. 16.*) it is for these that great men have their friends and followers for
the

the most part : And therefore it is plain, that the worst sort of men are ordinarily their friends ; For those are the worst men, that have not the Love of the Father in them, but are the friends of the world, and therefore the enemies of God, *Jam. 4. 4.* And the best, though fit to be their truest friends, are seldom their followers, as knowing that the attractive of the sensual world, is a shadow unfit to deceive those that are acquainted with its vanity, and a snare unfit to take those that have observed how Satan laies and baits the trap, and how they have sped that have been taken in it. A despised Christ that hath the words of eternal life, is much more followed by men that have the heavenly relish. Such gracious souls whose appetites are not corrupted by the creature and their sicknesses, have more mind to flock after a spiritual and powerful messenger of Christ, that talkes to them of his Kingdom and the Righteousness thereof, which they first seek, then to gape after the preferment and vain glory of prosperity. Christ that despised the offer of all the Kingdoms and Glory of the world, (*Mat 4: 8, 9.*) doth teach his followers to despise them.

Seeing

Seeing then the ordinary attendants of the prosperous, are the worst of men, that seek themselves, and are purveying for the flesh, what wonder if they be flatterers, that have neither skill nor will to speak that unpleasing language of reproof, that should make the prosperous *know themselves!* Oh how seldom (or never) do they hear, what the poor can hear from every mouth! If a man of low degree be wicked, or offend, his enemy dare tell him of it, and his friend dare tell him of it, and his angry neighbour or companion will be sure to tell him of it, and they dare tell him frequently till he amend, and tell him plainly, and set it home: But if great ones be as bad, and need more help, as having more temptation, yet alas they may sin, and sin again and perish, for any body that will deal faithfully with their souls; except some faithful Minister of Christ, whose plainness is taken but for a thing of course. And usually even Ministers themselves, are some of them so unfaithful, and some so fearful, and some so prudently cautelous, that such persons have no such help from them to *know themselves*, as the poorer sort of people have. If we deal freely with them, and set it home, it will be well taken;
or

if it offend, yet offence may easily be born, as bringing no ill consequents to our Ministry: but if we deal so with the great ones of the world, what outcries would it raise, and by what names should we and our preaching be called! If it were not for fear lest some malicious hearers would misunderstand me, and misapply my words, as spoken of those that we are bound to honour, and as tending to diminish the reputation of any of our superiors (which I detest) I should have shewed you all this in Scripture instances. When *Haman* could not bear the omission of one mans obeysance, what wonder if such cannot bear to be spoken to, as indeed they are! Not only an *Ahab* hateth one faithful plain *Michaiab*, because he prophesieth not good of him but evil, (1 *King.* 22. 8.) but *Asa* that destroyed Idolatry, can imprison the Prophet that reproveth him for his sin, 2 *Chron.* 16. 10. I will not tell you of the words that were spoken to *Amos* by the Priest of *Bethel*, *Amos* 7. 10, 11, 12, 13. or to the Prophet, 2 *Chron.* 25. 15, 16. lest malice mis-interpret and mis-report me; For it is none of my intent to fix on any particular persons, but to tell you in general, the lamentable disadvantage that
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the great and prosperous have as to the knowledge of themselves: how little plain dealing they have, and how hardly most of them can bear it: though yet I doubt not but it is born and loved by those that have true grace: and that if *David* sin, he can endure to hear from *Nathan* [*Thou art the man*] and this shall befall thee; and an *Eli* can bear the prophesie of *Samuel* and say, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*, 1 Sam. 2. 27. & 3. 17, 18. and an *Hezekiah* can say, *Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken*, 2 King. 20. 19. and *Josiah* can bear the threatnings of *Huldah*, 2 Chron. 34. & 2 King. 22. And it is a double honour in persons that have so great temptations, to love the plain discoveries of their sin: But a *Joash* will slay even *Zechariah* the son of *Jehoiadah* that set him up: and a *Herod*, that hath so much religion as to [*fear John, as knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and to observe* (or save him) *and when he heard him to do many things and hear him gladly*, had yet so much love to his fleshly lust, and so little power to resist a flatterer, as that he could sell both the head of *John* and his own soul, for so pittiful a price as this, Mar. 6. 20, 25, 27, 28. So true is that of Christ him-

self, Joh. 3. 20, 21. *For every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reprov'd (or discovered) But he that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.*

And indeed there is none that more opposeth *Micaiah* then *Zedekiah*; as being concerned for the honour of his flattering prophesie, to bring plain dealing into disgrace. It is he that smiteth him and saith, *which way went the spirit of the Lord from me, to speak unto thee*, 1 King. 22. 24. As *Platarch* compareth the flatterer to a painter, that having made a picture of Cocks which was very bad, he bid his boyes be sure to keep the living Cocks out of sight, lest their appearance should shew the faultiness of his picture: so saith *Platarch* doth the flatterer do what he can to keep away plain-dealing faithful friends lest his fraud and falshood should be detected by them: But saith *Solomon*, Prov. 28. 23. *He that rebuketh a man, afterward shall find more favour then he that flattereth with the tongue.* And Prov. 27. 6. *Faithful are the wounds of a friend: but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.* When prosperity is vanished, the flatterer and the faithful

ful dealer will be better known. *Deceitful prosperity*, and *deceitful men*, will at once forsake you. None of them will admire or applaud you when you are low, and the tide is gone, and hath left you in contempt: These kind of men will be as ready as any to reproach you; As *Shimei* that honoured *David* in his prosperity; but curseth him and revileth him as a Rebel against *Saul*, and casteth stones at him, when he saw him flying in distress. *Plutarch* likeneth flatterers to lice, that forsake the bodies of the dead, because the blood is gone that did maintain them. Commonly men in *misery* or at *death*, have better thoughts of *faithful plainness*, & worse of *smoothing man-pleasers*, then before.

But whom can the prosperous blame so much as themselves, if they are undone by the deceit of flatterers? It is their own choice: They love to have it so: They will not endure faithful dealing. When they contract those diseases which will not be cured without bitter medicines, they hate the Physician that offereth them: Their appetites and sensual lust, and not their Believing-Reason, doth choose their work, their pleasures and their company, and prescribe what language must be spoken to them. And he that resolves to cast away the re-

medy, and will please his appetite and fancie, come on it what will, must take what he gets by it, and bear the endless wrath of God, that could not bear the necessary warnings and self-knowledge that should have prevented it ; Did these men hate sin and the messengers of Satan, they would not hate the Justice and messengers of God. But while they damnably Love fleshly pleasures, they cannot savingly Love the word that chargeth them to let go those pleasures ; nor the persons that cross them in the things they love. And thus poor worldlings are ruined by their own desires : It seemeth so sweet to them to live in sin, that they cannot endure to know the bitter fruits of misery, which it will at last bring forth : They are conquered by their fleshly lusts ; and therefore they hate the messengers of that spirit, which would fight against them. Satan doth perfect his former victories in them, by dispelling or dispersing the auxiliaries of Christ, that were sent for their rescue and relief. They live as if they were *purposely made great*, that they may be able to drive away the messengers of salvation, and to keep the voice of mercy far enough from their ears : and to command that which the Gaderenes did intreat, that
Christ

Christ would go out of their coasts, *Mark. 5. 17.* because they would not be troubled with him: They so much love the way to Hell, that they cannot abide to be told whether it leadeth them; and therefore they come thither before they are aware; and must know themselves by the unquenchable fire, because they would not know themselves by the discovering recovering Light. And thus by Prosperity and flattery, Satan pursues and wins his game.

Dir. 2. **I**N opposition to this Hindrance, two things are to be done. 1. *Desire not* so perillous a station as worldly Prosperity and greatness is. *Love not* and *seek not* a condition so hazardous to your souls. Leave that to them that take it for their Portion, as not believing what they must *lose* and *suffer* by it: or what God hath revealed of the life to come.

Or if you *be in such Prosperity*, not by your *Desire*, but by the will and Providence of God, let your *fear* and *watchfulness* be doubled, as your dangers are: Be not like those sensualists, *Jud. 12.* that *feed themselves without fear*. Use not prosperity to the pleasing of the flesh, and the

prospering of your lusts : but deny your
your selves in the midst of your abundance :
and turn it into an *adversity* to your *sen-
sual inclinations*, by *taming the body and
bringing it into subjection*, and suspecting
your selves, and walking humbly with God
and man.

And when *Adversity* is upon you, *im-
prove the opportunity* for the *knowledge of
your selves*. Then take a just survey of
your former course of life. Then try your
ways, when the drunkenness and deceits of
prosperity are past, and the hand of God
hath brought you into a sober and confide-
rate state. O how many souls do know
that in one day, when adversity hath made
them wise and sensible, which before they
knew and *would not know* ; they *saw* it,
but did not *understand* and *feel* it ! Then
on a sudden they are able to pass a righter
judgement, upon their yielding to tempta-
tions, and the value of the things that
tempted them, and upon their worldly de-
signs, and fleshly wisdom, and their neg-
lects of God and Heaven and duty, then
before they could do, though they had never
so much instruction, and though they
could speak the same words of sin as now.
Affliction taketh away the deceiving advan-
tages

tages of fleshly objects, and unmasketh the glory and profit of the world, and awakeneth the rational faculties to perform their office; and therefore is an excellent opportunity for *self-acquaintance*. The prodigal *came to himself* when he was denyed to fill his belly with the food of swine, *Luke 15. 16, 17.* *Nature* teacheth men to understand that it is the principal Lesson that Affliction readeth to us, *To know our selves,* and *our ways,* as they are related to God and to *his judgement*.

2. If you are in *Prosperity*, be the more *suspicious* of flatterers, and drive them away with the greater detestation: Be more careful to keep them from you, then to keep your bodies clean from vermine. And be the more solicitous to procure such faithful *Overseers* and *Physicians* for your *souls*, as will do their best to *save you*, though they *displease you*. O that you knew what an advantage it is to have a *faithful Pastor*, and a *faithful Friend*, that seek not *yours* but *you*, and make no advantage to themselves by flattering you, but choose the means that tend most to your salvation! And O that you knew the great disadvantage of those that want such a *Pastor* and such a *friend*! You would then be sure to give it as

your strictest charge to both, to deal *plainly* with you, and never to hide or extenuate your sin or danger. You would charge your Teachers, [*Whatever* you do, deal faithfully with my soul ! If you see me in any dangerous course, I beseech you tell me of it : If I should be hardened against your warnings and reproofs, I beseech you deal not lightly with me, but labour to awaken me, and set it home, and pull me out of the fire, and save me as with fear ; *Jud. 23.*] O suffer me not to be quiet in my sins. The like charge also you would give to your friends that are about you, and converse with you ; choose such Pastors, and choose such friends as are fittest, thus to prove your friends indeed : And charge them and intreat them, as they love your souls, and as they will answer it before God, that they suffer you not to sin for fear of displeasing you by plain reproofs : and resolve to submit and take it well. A stander by hath the great advantage of impartiality ; and therefore may see that in you which you observe not in your selves : an object *too near* the eye, or *too far off*, is not well discerned : *self-love* doth not hinder us so much in judging of other mens cases as our own. Friendly
and

and faithful dealing in the matters of eternal consequence, is the principal use and benefit of friend-ship. This differenceth the communion of Saints from *Beelzebubs* swarme of flies and caterpillars. Thus two are better then one: For if they fall, thei one will lift up his fellow: But woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up, Eccles. 4. 9, 10. Much more woe to him that hath a multitude to cast him and to keep him down.

Hind. 3. **T**HE third extrinsecal Impediment to self-knowledge, is, *Conversing only with such as are as bad as our selves; and not with such whose lives display the spiritual endowment, and excellencies which we want.* Among the *Ethiopians*, it seemeth no deformity to be *Black*: *Seneca* saith, that no man is to be upbraided with that which is *vitium humani generis*, the common fault of all the world, or of the country where he lives: for this were but to upbraid him that he is a man, or that he was born in such a time or place: Though Christians that know better the common disease, do know that there must be common humiliation and remedie; yet these indeed
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are the thoughts of *most*: They know not that it is a matter of dishonour and lamentation, to be *no better then the most*, and to lie in the *common corruptions* of the world, and to have no better hearts then they had by *Nature*. To hear preachers talk of [*Holiness, and a Divine Nature, and a new birth, and of being made new Creatures, and of living in the Love of God, and in the joyful Hopes of endless Glory*] doth seem to them but as the talk of a world in the sun, or the description of an *Angel*, which *humbleth not them* at all, for not being *such*, nor exciteth in them any great desires to be *such*: As long as they see not the persons that are *such*, they think these are but devout *imāinations*, or the *pious dreams* of melancholy men; and that *indeed* there are no such persons in the world: or if there be, that they are but as the Papists Saints, here and there one to be *admired and canonized*, and not upon pain of *damnation* to be *imitated*. They judge of all the world, or almost all, by those about them; And they think that God should be unmerciful if he should condemn so great a number as they see are *like themselves*; and should save none but those few transcendent souls, that they are described, but hear unacquainted with.

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It sometimes melteth my heart, in pittie of many *Great ones* of the world, to think how *hard* a mater it is for them to know indeed *what Holiness is*; when they seldome hear so much as one *Heavenly prayer* or *Discourse*, or *any serious talke* of the matters of *Sanctification*, and *communion with Christ* ! When *prophaness* and *inhumane wickedness* dwell about them, and make such as are but *civil* and *temperate*, and *good-natur'd* persons to seem *Saints* : When they see but few that *fear the Lord*, and *Love him unfeignedly*, and *live by faith* : and those few are perhaps of the more *cold*, and *timerous*, and *temporizing* Strain, that shew forth but little of the *Heavenly nature*, and the *vertues* of their holy faith ; that dare scarce open their mouths to *speak* against the wickedness which they see or hear : that dare not *discourse* like the *Saints of the most High*, and the *heirs of Heaven*, for fear of being made the *scorn* and *by-word* of the rest, or of falling under the *frowns* and *dislike* of their superiors ; so that they live among others *almost like common men*, save only that they run not with them to their excess of ryot ; and think it enough that by such forbearance of gross sin, they are in some measure *evil spoken*

Spoken of : When they that should let their light so shine before men, that they might see their good works, and glorifie their heavenly Father, (Matth. 5. 15. 16.). do hide their Religion, and put their Light as under a bushel, and not in a Candlestick, that it might give light to all that are in the house ; and so when Religion never appeareth in its proper splendor and power, and heavenly tendencie, to those Great ones that have no better company ; what wonder if they never know themselves, nor truly understand the nature, necessity or excellency of Religion ? When they know it, for the most part, but by heresay ; yea and when they hear it more reproached then applauded ; it must be a miracle of mercy that must make such men to be sincerely and heartily Religious. When they see so many about them worse then themselves, and so few better, and those few that are better do hide it and live almost as if they were no better ; and when the godly whom they see not, are described to them by the Serpents seed, as if they were but a company of whining melancholy brain-sick hypocrites ; who can expect that ever such men should savingly know themselves or Christ, unless a wonder of mercy rescue them, and bring them

them from this darkness and delusion into the light? O how oft have I wished in compassion to many of the *Great ones* of the world, that they had but the *company* which we that are their inferiors have! that they did but *hear* the humble, holy heavenly language, *that we* have heard? and hear the faithful fervent prayers, that many poor Christians pour out before the Lord! and *saw* but the humble, harmless, exemplary and heavenly lives, of many *poor Christians*, that are represented to them as the *filth and the off scouring of the world*, and perhaps no more regarded then *Lazarus* was at the Rich mans gate, *Luk. 16.* Did they but *see and hear and know* such holy and heavenly Believers, and were as well acquainted with them as *we* are, how many of them would better *know themselves*, and see what they *want*, and what they *must be*, and better discern between the righteous and the wicked, between those that fear God, and that fear him not! *Mal. 3. 18.*

Dir.

Dir. 3. **I**T will therefore be a great help to the Knowledge of your selves, if you will *converse with those that bear the Holy Image of their Creator, (Col. 3. 10.)* and whose *lives* will tell you what it is to *live by faith*, and what it is to *walke in the spirit*, to *mortifie the flesh*, and to live above all the alluring vanities of the world. We can more sensibly perceive the nature of holiness, when we *see it in action* before our eyes, than when we *only read a description* of it. Who could have known what *Life* is, or what *Reason* is, by bare *reading or hearing* their *descriptions*, if he knew them not in *himself and others*, by another kind of demonstration ! Many thousands can honour the *name* of a *Saint* and the *Scripture description* of a *Saint*, that hate the *life of holiness*, when it *appeareth* to them in *practice*, and cannot endure a *Saint indeed*. It will most convincingly tell you what *you want*, when you *see what others have*. To see how *naturally* they *breath* after heaven, will most convincingly shew you the *dulness and earthliness of your minds* : To see how easily they can *love an enemy*, and *for-*
give

ive a wrong, will acquaint you most sensibly with the ulcers of your passionate revengeful minds. Do but lay by your prejudice and partiality, and see whether there be not in serious Christians *another spirit* than in the world? and whether they *live not* upon the things *above*, which your belief and love did never *reach*? Look upon believers, and consider why *they pray*, and *watch* and study to please God, and then bethink your selves whether *you* have not as much cause to do so as they: and so you may perceive your negligence by their diligence, your senselessness by their tenderness of heart and conscience; your fleshliness by their spirituality, and the rest of your sins by the luster of their graces. Saith Gregory [*Qui plenissime intelligere appetit qualis sit, tales debet aspicere qualis non est; ut in bonorum forma metiatur quantum ipse deformis est.*] that is [*He that would fully understand what he is, must look on such as are better than himself: that in the comparison of the good he may take the measure of his own deformity.*] As Isidore saith [*Minus homo seipsam ex seipso considerat*] Men know not themselves by themselves alone.

Hence

Hence therefore the servants of God may see how *exactly they should live*, and of what *consequence* it is that they be *eminently holy* ! when it is *they* that by their heavenly excellency must convince the world of their sinfulness and misery. O Christians, *do you* live such *exemplary and convincing* lives ? Is there indeed that *excellency of Holiness* appearing in you, which may shew men, to the glory of your Redeemer, how the heirs of heaven do differ from the world ? Alas, our common careless living doth wrong to multitudes as well as to ourselves ; and is a cruelty to the souls whose salvation we are bound by our examples to promote. What then do those men that by their vicious scandalous conversation, do harden the ungodly, and cause them to think contemptuously, and to speak scornfully of the holy way ! O woe to them, if they repent not, by whom such offence cometh.

Especially Ministers should see that their lives be a *continual Lecture* ; As Hierome saith [*Episcopi domus & conversatio quasi in speculo posita, Magistra est publica disciplina : quicquid fecerit, id sibi omnes faciendum putant.*] That is, [*The house and conversation of a Bishop, is set as in a glass* (or

(or to be beheld) as the teacher of publike discipline : All think they should do what-ever he doth.] And therefore Chrysostome concludeth [that a Priest that is bad, doth acquire by his priest-hood, not dignity but disgrace : For (saith he) thou sittest in judgement on thy self : If thou live well and preach well, thou instructest the people : If thou preach well and live ill, thou condemnest thy self. For by living well and preaching well, thou instructest the people how to live : But by preaching well and living ill, thou instructest God as it were how to condemn thee.]

And hence it is also that the servants of God should have a care of their fame, as well as of their conversation, because the reputation of religion dependeth much on the reputation of the religious : and reputation doth much to the encouraging or discouraging of the ungodly that are strangers to the things themselves. Saith Augustine, [*Conscientia necessaria est tibi, fama proximo tuo : Qui famam aucupans negligit conscientiam, hypocrita est : Qui confidens conscientiae negligit famam, crudelis est.*] that is, [Conscience is necessary for thy self : and thy good name is necessary for thy neighbour.] He that hunteth after fame,

and neglecteth conscience, is an hypocrite : And he that so trusteth to a good conscience as to neglect his good name, is cruel (to others) When we mind our fame for the good of others, and the service of God, and not to please a proud vainglorious mind, and when we do it without immoderate care, seeking it only by righteous means, and referring the issue to the will of God, as being prepared for evil report as well as good, this is but to improve our talent to our masters use.

II. **I** Come next to the *Internal impediments to self acquaintance*, especially in the *worser sort of men.*

I. The first that I shall acquaint you with, is, that *Natural deep rooted sin of Pride, which strongly inclineth men to think well of themselves, and to desire that all others do so too.* So that where Pride is not discovered and subdued by grace, men will scarce endure to be closely questioned by Ministers or other friends about their sin, and the condition of their souls : what, question them whether they are *ungodly, unsanctified, the servants of sin*
and

and Satan; in a state of death, and condemnation? Their hearts will rise with indignation against him that will put such questions to them. What! question them whether they have any saving grace! whether they are regenerate, pardoned, and have any grounded hopes of heaven! They love not the searching word of God; they love not the distinguishing passages of Scripture, they love not a faithful searching Minister, because they would dishonour and trouble them with such doubts as these. A Proud man judgeth not of himself as he is, but as his tumified distempered fancie representeth him to himself to be. To think himself something when he is nothing, and so to be wilfully his own deceiver, is his disease, Gal. 6. 3. And as Pride is one of the deepest-rooted sins in man, and of greatest strength, and hardest extirpated and overcome; so true self-acquaintance must be accordingly difficult, it being carryed on but by such degrees as we get ground and victory against our pride. As Melancholy men that are wise in all other things, may be far from the right use of reason in some one point, where the fantasie is crazed and the distemper lyeth; so a Proud man, how

wise soever in any other matters, as to the *right knowledge of himself*, is like one that is *crackt-brained*, and hath not indeed the *use of reason* ; *Pride* was his first Tutor, and taught him what to *believe of himself* : so that Christ who comes after with a humbling doctrine, cannot be *believed*, nor scarce with any *patience heard* : O what a disease is to be cured, before a Proud person will well know himself ! What labour do we lose in all our sermons ! Yea how oft doth the *medicine irritate the disease* ! So that a poor wretch that is under the wrath of God, and knoweth not when he is gone out of the assembly, whether the justice of heaven will not take vengeance on him before he come hither again, yet cannot abide to hear of this, but with *Ahab*, hateth the Preacher that prophesieth evil of him, be it never so true. It is pride that leadeth up that armie of corruptions, that here strive against the light of truth, that is sent to convince and convert the guilty. And is a man like to be *saved* by the word, while he *hateth* it, and bends his thoughts and passions all against it ?

Dir. 1. **H**E therefore that will ever know himself, must first let in so much of the light, as may take down his arrogancy, and bring him as a little child to the school of Christ. First know what thou art as *Man* ; and then know what thou art as a *sinner*, and sentenced by *God* ; that so thou mayst come to know what thou art as one that is under the hopes and duties of the *Redeemed*. When thy proud heart rebelleth against conviction, remember with whom thou hast to do. Will *God* speak submissively to thee for fear of offending thee ? will he cry thee mercy for handling thee so roughly as to tell thee thou art yet the child of wrath ? Is he afraid to talke to thee of death or of damnation ? Will he recall his threatnings, and repent him of the severity of his laws, because such worms are angry with them, or will not believe them ? Perhaps thou mayst make a false-hearted, frightful, man-pleasing Minister, to change his strain of plainer dealing, and become thy flatterer, or be silent : But will *God* be silenced ? will he stoop to thee, and bend or stretch his word to humor thee ? O no ; he will one day tell thee what thou art

with another voice then this of a mortal and despised man, and in another manner then *preachers* tell it thee. If thou canst frown the *Preacher* out of the *pulpit*, or out of his fidelity to God and thee, yet canst thou not frown *God* out of *heaven*. He will speak to thee more terribly, then the terriblest preacher that ever thou heardst : And if thy *Pride* shall rise up, and tell him that he doth thee wrong, how quickly will thy *mouth be stopped*, and thou be forced to confess thy guilt ! *Rom. 3. 5, 6, 19.* O stoop man to the humbling word of grace ; or God will make thee stoop to the words and strokes of wrath. Fear him that will make the proudest fear, before he hath done with them. Judged thou must be, by *thy self*, to *self-abasing* and *conversion*, or by *God* to *desolation* and *confusion* : And canst thou easier bear *Gods judgement* then *thy own* ! Stoop foolish self-deluding dust ! Stoop sinful wretch, and know thy misery ! If thou stand it out a little longer, an undiscerned blow will bring thee down ; and thou shalt not see the hand that strikes thee, till thou art humbled to the grave and hell. O how absurd, yet pittiful a sight is it, to see poor sinners brave it out against the humbling message of the

the Lord ! as if they could make good their cause against him ! and scorn to know that they are going to Hell, till they are there ! And then, will Pride preserve them from the knowledge of it ? It is shameful folly to be Proud and obstinate, where a man knoweth beforehand that he must submit at last, and is not able to stand it out.

2. **T**HE second *Intrinsic* Impediment to self-acquaintance is an unreasonable tenderness of our selves ; when an inordinate Love of ease and quietness of mind doth prevail with us to hold fast all that thus quieteth us at the present, without regard of due provision for the time to come ; In this there is a mixture of unreasonableness and self-love : It is indeed the very brutish disposition. A beast will not willingly be dieted for his future health : Let him have at present what he loveth and you please him, though you feed him for the slaughter ! for he hath not reason to foresee what followeth : An ox must be bound and cast and held down by force, if you will shooe him, though it be to the keeping of his feet from hurt ; or if you will pull out a thorn, or do any thing for his good that hurteth him at the present : you please not

your horse by letting him blood, though you save his life by it. Fleshly-minded men have thus brutified themselves, so that they judge of things by *present feeling*, and have not Reason and Faith to look before them, and judge of things by what they tend to ; even by the good or hurt that will follow in the end. It is a very terrible troublesome thing, for a man that is unregenerate, unjustified, and unreconciled to God, to know it; For a man that hath any feeling left, to find himself in a state of condemnation : This is to stir up all the terrors of his soul, and cast him into perplexing fears and disquietments of mind ; so that he cannot eat, or drink, or sleep in quietness, but the troublesome thoughts of sin and everlasting wrath torment him : And the inconsiderate man that judgeth of things by present feeling, will not endure this ; and therefore must needs have the windows shut, and the light removed that sheweth him these perplexing sights : As most men hate those that speak against them, be the matter never so true ; so they cannot endure those thoughts that do accuse them, nor to have a reprovor so near them, even in their own breasts : A Conscience within them, to preach to them night and day

day ; not one hour in a week ; but where-
ever they go, and whatever they are doing ;
to be so *neer*, so *constant*, so *precise*, and so
severe and *terrible* a Preacher, as usually a
newly enlightened and awakened consci-
ence is ; this seemeth intolerable to them ;
And whatever come of it, this Preacher
must be silenced, as turbulent and vexati-
ous, and one that would make them Me-
lancholy or mad. And this is the con-
demnation of these miserable souls, that
light is come into the world, and they loved
darkness rather than light, because their
deeds were evil : For every one that doth
evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to
the light, lest his deeds should be reprov-
ed, *Joh. 3. 19, 20.* And thus while men are so
tender of themselves, that they will do
nothing that troubleth or hurteth them at
the present, they venture upon all the
miseries that they are forewarned of.

Dir. 2. **B**E not *unreasonably* tender of
a little disturbance at the pre-
sent, nor *unbelievingly* careless of the misery
to come. Cannot you endure to know
your sin and misery, and yet can you endure
to bear it ? will you go to Hell for fear of
knowing

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knowing that you are *in the way*? Must you not know it with everlasting woe and vengeance when you come thither, if by *knowing your danger* you prevent not your coming thither? Is it easier to bear Gods wrath for ever, than to find at present that you have offended him? Sirs, the question is *whether you are under the condemnation of the law, or not*? Whether you are regenerate and justified, or yet in your sin? If you are *justified*, far be it from me to perswade you to think that you are under condemnation: I leave that to Satan and the malicious world, who are the condemners of those that Christ doth Justifie. But if you are *unregenerate and unjustified*, what will you do at *death and judgement*? Can you stand before God, or be saved upon any other terms? You cannot; if God be to be believed, you cannot: and if you know the Scriptures, you *know* you cannot! And if you cannot be saved in an unrenewed unjustified state, is it not needful that you *know it*? Will you cry for help before you find your selves *in danger*? or strive to get out of sin and misery, before you believe that you are *in it*? If you think that you have no other sin than the pardoned infirmities of the Godly, you will
never

never so value Jesus Christ, and pray and strive for such grace as is necessary to them that have the unpardoned reigning sins of the ungodly. If it be necessary that you be saved, it is necessary that you value and seek salvation ; and if so, it is necessary that you know your need of it, and what you must be and do if you will obtain it ! It is a childish or brutish thing, below a man of reason, to stick at a little present trouble, when Death cannot otherwise be prevented : If you can prove that ever any was converted and saved by any other way then by coming to the knowledge of their sin and misery, then you have some excuse for your presumption : But if Scripture tell us of no other way, yea that *there is* no other way, and you know of none that ever was saved by any other, I think it is time to fall to work, and search and try your Hearts and lives, and not to stop at a straw when you are running for your lives, and when damnation is as it were at your backs. You should rather think with your selves, If we can so hardly bear the forethoughts of Hell, how shall we be able everlastingly to bear the torments ?

And consider, that *Christ* hath made the discovery of your sin and misery to be now
com-

comparatively an *easy burden*, in that he hath made them *pardonable* and *curable*: If you had not had a *Saviour* to fly to, but must have looked on your misery as a *remediless case*, it had then been *terrible indeed*; and it had been no great mistake to have thought it the best way to take a little ease at present, rather than to disquiet your selves in vain. But through the great mercy of God, this is not your case; you need not despair of pardon and salvation, if you will but hear while it is called *To day*. The task that you are called to, is not to *torment your selves* as the damned do, with the thought of unpardonable sin, and of a misery that hath no help or hope; but it is only to find out your disease, and come and open it to the Physician, and submit to his advice and use his means, and he will freely and infallibly work the cure. It is but to find out the folly that you have been guilty of, and the danger that you have brought your selves into, and come to Christ, and with hearty sorrow, and resolution to give up your selves unto his grace, to cast away your iniquities, and enter into his safe and comfortable service. And will you lie in Hell, and say, We are suffering here, that we might escape the trouble

trouble of foreseeing our danger of it, or of endeavouring in time to have prevented it ! We dyed for fear of knowing that we were sick ! We suffered our house to burn to ashes for fear of knowing, that it was on fire ! O Sirs, be warned in time, and own not, and practice not such egregious folly, in a business of everlasting consequence. Believe it, if you sin, you must know that you have sinned : and if you are in the power of Satan, it cannot long be hid. Did you but know the difference between discovering it now while there is hope, and hereafter when there is none, I should have no need to perswade you to be presently willing to know the truth, whatever it should cost you.

Hind. 3. **A**Nother great impediment of the Knowledge of ourselves, is, that self-love so blindeth men that they can see no great evil in themselves or any thing that is their own : It makes them believe that all things are as they would have them be ; Yea and better than they would have them : For he that would not indeed be Holy, is willing by himself and others to be thought so : Did not the lamentable experience of all the world confirm

firm it, it were incredible that *self love* could so exceedingly blind men. If *Charity* think *no evil* of *another*, and we are very hardly brought to believe any great harm by those we love ; much more will self-love cause men to see *no evil by themselves*, which possibly they can shut their eyes against : it being more radicated and powerful than the love of *others*. No arguments so cogent, no light so clear, no oratory so perswading, as can make a self-lover think himself as bad as indeed he is, till God by grace or terror shall convince him. When you are preaching the most searching sermons to convince him, self-love contuteth or misapplyeth them ; When the marks of tryal are most plainly opened, and most closely urged, self-love doth frustrate the preachers greatest skill and diligence : When nothing of sense can be said to prove the piety of the impious, and the sincerity of the formal hypocrite, yet *self love* is that wonderful Alchymist, that can make gold not only of the basest metal, but of dross and dirt : Let the most undeniable witness be brought to detect the fraud and misery of an unrenewed soul, *self-love* is his most powerful defender ; No cause so bad which it cannot justify ; and no person so miserable but it will pronounce him

him happy, till God by *Grace* or *Wrath* confute it. Self-love is the grand Deceiver of the world.

Dir. 3. **S**ubdue this inordinate self-love, and bring your minds to a just impartiality in judging. Remember that self-love is only powerful at your private bar : and it is not there that your cause must be finally decided : It can do nothing at the bar of God ; It cannot there justifie, where it is condemned it self : God will not so much as bear it, though you will hear none that speak against it : self-love is but the vicegerent of the grand Usurper, that shall be deposed and have no shew of power, at Christs appearing, when he will judge his enemies.

And here it will be a helpful course, to see your own sin and misery in others, and put the case as if it were theirs, and then see how you can discern the evil of it. O how easie is it with the most, to see and aggravate the faults of others ? How safe were we if we were as impartial to ourselves !

And .

And also it will be very useful to desire often the help of more impartial judgments than your own: *Fit enim nescio quomodo (inquit Cicero) ut magis in aliis cernamus, quam in nobis met ipsis, siquid delinquitur.* Others can quickly spie our faults, as we can quickly find out theirs: Therefore as Poets and Painters do expose their works before they finish them; to the common view; that so what is blamed by many may be considered and amended; so should we in order to the judging of our selves, observe both what our friends and enemies say of us, and the more suspiciously try what others blame. But especially have some neer judicious friends that will prudently and faithfully assist you. A true friend is an excellent looking-glass. Saith *Seneca, Deliberate well first in the choosing of a friend, and then with him deliberate of all things.*

And if you would have the benefits of friendship, discourage not plain dealing. *Magis amat objurgator sanans (inquit August.) quam adulator dissimulans.* I know a reprover should be wile, and love must be predominant if he will expect success; for if he speak *lacerato animo*, as *Augustine* saith, it will seem but *punientis impetus*

impetus and not *corrigentis charitas*.) But we must take heed of judging that we are hated, because we are *reproved*: that is, that a friend is not a friend, because he doth the office of a friend. Of the two it is fitter to say of a reproving enemy, *He dealeth with me like a friend*] then of a reproving friend, *He dealeth with me like an enemy*:] For, as *Augustine* saith, *Accusare vitia officium est bonum, quod cum mali faciunt, alienas partes agunt*] It is a good office to speak ill of vice, which when bad men do, they play anothers part. It is a happy enmity that helpeth you to deliver you from *sin and hell*: and a cruel friendship that will let you undoe your soul for ever, for fear of displeasing you by hindering it.

There are two sorts that deprive themselves of the saving benefit of necessary reproof, and the most desirable fruits of friendship: The one is the *Hypocrite* that so *cunningly hideth* his greatest faults, that his friend and enemy never tell him of them: He hath the happiness of keeping his physician unacquainted with his disease, and consequently of keeping the disease. The other is the *Proud*, that can better endure to be *ungodly* then to be told

of it, and to live in many sins, then to be freely admonished of one.

Consider therefore that it will prove *self-hatred* in the effect, which is now called *self-love* : and that it would seem but a strange kind of *love from another*, to suffer you to fall into a *Cole-pit*, for fear of telling you that you are neer it ; or to suffer you to fall into the enemies hands, lest he should affright you by telling you that they are neer : If you love *another* no better then thus, you have no reason to call your self his *friend* ; And shall this be your wisest Loving of your selves ? If it be Love to damn your souls for fear of *knowing your danger of damnation*, the *Devil* loveth you : If it be friendship to keep you out of Heaven for fear of disquieting you with the Light that should have saved you, then you have no enemies in Hell. The Devil himself can be content to grant you a *temporal quietness and ease*, in order to your everlasting disquietness and woe. Let go your *hopes of Heaven*, and he can let you be merry a while on earth : while the strong armed man keepeth his house, the things that he possesseth are in peace. If it be not *friendship* but *enmity* to trouble you with
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the sight of sin and danger, in order to your deliverance, then you have *none* but *enemies in Heaven* : For *God himself* doth take this course, with the dearest of his chosen. No *star* doth give such light as the *Sun* doth : No *Minister* doth so much to make a sinner *know himself*, as *God* doth. *Love your selves* therefore in the way that *God loveth you* : Be impartially willing that *God and man* should help you to be thoroughly acquainted with your state : Love not to be flattered by others or your selves. Vice is never the more lovely because it is yours : And you know that pain is never the more easie or desirable to you, because it is yours. Your *own* diseases, losses, injuries, and miseries, seem the worst and most grievous to you : And why should not *your own sins* also be most grievous ? You love not poverty, or pain, because its your own ; O love not sin because it is your own.

Hind. 4. **A** Nother impediment to self-acquaintance, is, that men observe not their hearts in a time of trial, but take them always at the best, when no great temptation puts them to it. A man that never had any opportunity to rise in the world, perhaps doth think he is not ambitious, and desireth not much to be higher then he is : because the coal was never blown : when a little affront doth ferment their Pride into disquietness and desires of revenge ; or applause doth ferment it into tumor or self-exaltation, they observe not then the distemper when it is up and most observable ; because the nature of sin is to please and blind, and cheat the mind into a consent : And when the sin seems past, and they find themselves in a seeming humility and meekness, they judge of themselves as then they find themselves, as thinking that distemper is past and cured, and they are not to judge of themselves by what they were, but what they are. And by that Rule every drunkard or whoremonger should judge themselves temperate, and chaste, as soon as they
forbear.

forbear the act of sin: And what if poverty, age or sickness hinder them from ever committing either of them again? For all this the person is a drunkard or fornicator still; because the *Act* is not pardoned, nor the heart sanctified, and the habit or corruption mortified. And thus passionate persons do judge of themselves by their milder temper, when no temptation kindleth the flame. But little doth many a one know himself, what corruption is latent in his heart, till tryal shall disclose it, and draw it into sight. *Jam diu Diabolus (inq. August.) sopitum ignem sine ullis flammis occultat, donec duas faculas jungens ambas simul accendat, &c.*] If these persons be not always sinning, they will not take themselves for sinners: But he that hath once sinned knowingly, in Gods account continueth in the sin, till his heart be changed by true repentance.

Yet, on the other side, I would not wrong any upright soul, by perswading them to judge of themselves, as they are at the worst, in the hour of temptation; for so they will be mistaken as certainly; though not as dangerously as the other.

You will aske then, *What is to be done in such a difficult case ? If we must neither judge of our selves as we are at the best out of temptation, not yet as we are at the worst in the hour of temptation, when and how then shall we judge of our selves ?*

I answer, It is one thing to know our particular sins, and their Degrees, and another thing to know our state in general, whether we are justified and sanctified or not. To discern what particular sin is in us, and how apt it is to break forth into act, we must watch all the stirrings and appearings of it, in the time of the temptation : But to discern whether it be *unmortified* and have *dominion*, we must observe these Rules.

1. *There is no man on earth that is perfectly free from sin : and therefore it is no good consequence, that sin reigneth unto death, because it is not perfectly extinguished, or because it is sometime committed, unless in the cases after expressed.*

2. *No sin that is truly Mortified and Repented of, shall condemn the sinner : For pardon is promised to the truly penitent.*

3. *Whatever sin the Will, accordingly to its Habitual inclination, had rather leave then keep, is truly Repented of and mortified.*

For

For the Will is the principal seat of sin ; and there is no mere sinfulness, then there is wilfulness, Rom. 7. 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22.

4. There are some sins which cannot be frequently committed in consistency with true grace, or sincere repentance : and some which may be frequently committed in consistency with these. As where sins are known and great, or such as are easily subject to the power of a sanctified will, so that he that will reject them, may : As one such sin must have actual Repentance, if actually known ; so the frequent committing of such will not consist with Habitual Repentance. Whereas those sins, that are so small as upright persons perhaps may not be sufficiently excited to resistance ; or such as upon the sincere use of means are still unknown, or such as a truly sanctified Will may not subdue, are all of them consistent with repentance and a justified state ; And in this sense we reject not that distinction betwixt Mortal and Venial sin ; that is, between sin inconsistent with a state of spiritual life, and sin consistent with it, and consequently pardoned. He that had rather leave the former sort (the mortal sins) will leave them ; and he that

truly repents of them, will forsake them : But of the other (consistent with Life) we must say, that a man may possibly retain them, that yet had rather leave them, and doth truly repent of them.

5. *A sin of carnal Interest (esteemed good in order to some thing which the flesh desireth ; and so loved and deliberately kept) hath more of the Will, and is more inconsistent with Repentance, then a sin of meer passion or surprize, which is not so valued upon the account of such an interest.*

6. *They that have grace enough to avoid Temptations to Mortal or Reigning sin, and consequently that way to avoid the sin, shall not be condemned for it, whatever a stronger temptation might have done.*

7. *Where bodily diseases necessitate to an act, or the omission of an act, the Will is not to be charged with that which it cannot overcome, notwithstanding an unfeigned willingness : As if a man in a frenzie or distraction should swear or curse, or blaspheme ; or one in a Lethargie, or potent Melancholy cannot read or pray, or meditate ; &c.*

8. *As frequent Commissions of venial sins (or such as are consistent with true grace)*

grace) will not prove the soul unsanctified; so the once committing of a gross sin by surprize, which is afterward truly repented of, will not prove the absence of habitual repentance, or spiritual life, so as the frequent committing of such sins will.

So that I conclude, in order to the detection of the sin itself, we must all take notice of our selves as at the worst, and see what it is that Temptations can do: but in order to the discovery of our state, and whether our sins are pardoned or no, we must especially observe whether their eruptions are such as will consist with true habitual Repentance, and to note what Temptations do with us; to this end,

Dir. 4.

Dir. 4. **O**bserve then the workings and discoveries of the heart, and judge of its abundance, or habits by your words and deeds. Note what you were when you had opportunity to sin, when the full cup of pleasure was held out to you, when preferment was before you, when injurie or provoking words did blow the coal; If then sin appeared, judge not that you are free, and that none of the roots are latent in your hearts; Or if you are sure that such dispositions are hated, repented of and mortified, yet you may hence observe what diseases of soul you should chiefly strive against, to keep them under, and prevent a new surprize or increase. It is usual for such licentiousness, such self-seeking, such ugly pride and passion to break forth upon some special temptations, which for many years together did never appear to the person that is guilty, or to any other, that it should keep the best in fear and self-suspicion, and cause them to live
in

inconstant watchfulness, and to observe the bent and motions of their souls : and to make use afterward of such discoveries as they have made to their cost in time of tryal.

And it much concerneth *all true Christians*, to keep in remembrance the exercise and discoveries of grace which formerly upon tryal did undoubtedly appear, and did convince them of the sincerity which afterward they are apt again to question. Will you not believe that there is a *sun* in the firmament unless it *always shine* upon you ? Or that it is *hot* unless it be *always Summer* ? Will you not believe that a man *can speak*, unless he be *always speaking* ? It is weakness and injurious rashness in those Christians, that upon every damp that seizeth on their spirits, will venture to deny Gods former mercies, and say that they had *never special grace*, because they *feel* it not at *present* : that they *never prayed* in sincerity, because some distemper at present discomposeth or overwhelmeth them : that their former *zeal* and *life* was *counterfeit*, because they are grown more *cold* and *dull* ; that
their

their former comforts were all but hypocritical delusions, because they are turned now to sorrows : As much as to say, *Because I am now sick, I was never well, nor so much as alive.* O were it not for the tender compassions of our Father, and the sure performance of our Lord and Comforter, and that our peace is more in his hand than our own (though more in our own than any others,) it could never be that a poor distempered imperfect soul, should here have any constancie of peace ; Considering the power of self-love and partiality, on one side, and of grief and fear and other passions on the other ; and how little a thing doth shake so moveable and weak a thing, and muddy and trouble a mind so easily disturbed ; and how hard it is again to quiet and compose a mind so troubled, and bring a grieved soul to reason, and make passion understand the truth, and to cause a *weake afflicted soul* to judge clean contrary to what they feel : all this considered, no wonder if the peace and comfort of many Christians be yet but *little and interrupted and uneven* : and if there be *much crying* in a family that hath so many *little ones*, and much

complaining where there are so many weak and poor : and many a *groane* where there is so much *pain*. To shew us the *Sun* at *midnight* ; and convince us of *Love* while we *feel* the *rod* ; and to give us the comfortable sense of *grace*, while we have the uncomfortable sense of the *greatness* of our *sin* ; to give us the *joyful hopes* of *glory*, in a *troubled melancholy dejected* State : all this is a work that requireth the special helpe of the Almighty, and exceeds the strength of feeble worms. Let God give us never so full discoveries of his tenderest Love and our own sincerity, as if a voice from Heaven had witnessed it unto us, we are questioning all if once we seem to *feel* the contrary, and are perplexed in the tumult of our thoughts and passions, and bewildred and lost in the errors of our own disturbed minds. Though we have *walkt* with God, we are questioning whether indeed we ever knew him, as soon as he seemeth to hide his face. Though we have felt another life and spirit possess and actuate us than heretofore, and found that we love the things and persons which once we loved not, and that

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we were quite falln out with that which was our former pleasure, and that our souls broke off from their old delights, and hopes and ways, and resolutely did engage themselves to God, and unfeignedly delivered up themselves unto him; yet *all is forgotten*, or the convincing *evidence* of *all* forgotten, if the lively influences of heaven be but once so far withdrawn, as that our present state is clouded and afflicted, and our former vigour and assurance is abated. And thus unthankfully we deny God the praise and acknowledgement of his mercies, longer than we are *tasting* them, or they are *still before us*; All that he hath *done* for us is as *nothing*, and all the *Love* which he hath manifested to us is called *hatred*; and all the *witnesses* that have put their hands to his Acts of Grace, are *questioned*; and his very *seals* *denied*, and his *earnest* *misinterpreted*, as long as our *darkened distempered* souls are in a condition *unfit* for the *apprehension* of Mercy; and usually when a *diseased* or *afflicted* body doth draw the *mind* into too great a participation of the affliction. And thus as we are *disposed* *our selves*,
 so

so we judge of *our selves* and of all our *receivings*, and all *Gods dealings* with us : A soul in a *cheerful lively frame*, thinks well of all that God doth to him ; and hath thoughts of *Hope*, and *Peace*, and *Joy* ; as *Health* disposeth the body to *alacrity*, and can make a man *merry*, that hath little else : Whereas a soul *overwhelmed* with *cares*, and *fears*, and *griefs*, and *muddied* with *sinfull excessive thoughtfulness*, and *habituated* in a *diseased sickly frame*, is *afraid* of every thing, and turneth matter of *comfort* into *sorrow*, and is in *daily pain* by its *own imaginations* ; like a man that hath a *sore*, and is hurt with the *thought* that *some body toucht* it. When we *feel our selves well*, all goes well with us, and we put a good interpretation upon all things : And when we are *out of order*, we complain of every thing, and take pleasure in nothing, and no one can content us, and all is taken in the *worser part* ; As the Poet said,

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Lata fere latius cecini, cano tristia tristis.

You shall have a merry song from a merry heart, and a sad ditty from a troubled grieved mind.

And thus while the discoveries both of *sin* and *grace*, are at present overlooked, or afterwards forgotten, and almost all men judge of themselves by present feeling, no wonder if few are well acquainted with themselves.

But as the *Word* and the *works* of God must be taken together, if they be understood, and not a sentence, part or parcel taken separated from the rest which must make up the sense : so also the *workings* of God upon your souls must be taken altogether : and you must read them over from the first till now, and set all together, and not forget the letters, the part that went before, or else you will make no sense of that which followeth. And I beseech all weak and troubled Christians to remember also that they are but children and Schollars in the school of Christ : and therefore when they cannot set the several parts together,

together, let them not overvalue their unexperienced understandings, but by the help of their skilful faithful Teachers, do that which of themselves they cannot do: Enquire what your former mercies signify: Open them to your guides, and tell them how God hath dealt with you from the *beginning*, and tell them how it is with you *now*: and desire them to help you to perceive how *one* conduceth to the right understanding of the *other*. And be not of *froward* but of *tractable submissive minds*; and thus your *self-acquaintance* may be maintained, at least to *safety*, and to *some degree of peace*, if not to the *joys*, which you desire, which God reserveth for their proper season.

I Should have added more on this necessary subject, but that I have said so much of it in other writings, especially in the *Saints Rest*, Part. 3. chap. 7. and in my *Treatise of Self-denial*, and in the *Right Method for Peace of Conscience*.

I must confess I have written on this subject as I did of *Self-denyal*, viz. with expectation that all men should confess the truth of what I say; and yet so few be cured by it of their *Self-ignorance*, as that still we must stand by, and see the *world distracted* by it, the *Church divided*, the *Love of Brethren interrupted*, and the *work of Satan carried on* by error, violence, and pride; and the hearts of men so strangely stupified, as to go on incorrigibly in all this mischief, while the *cause and cure* are opened before them, and all in *vain*, while they confess the truth! so that they will leave us nothing to do, but exercise our *compassion* by lamenting the deliration of phrenetick men, while we are *unable* to *save* the *Church*, their *brethren*, or their *own souls*, from the dilacerations and calamitous effects of their furious *self-ignorance*. But Christ that hath sent us with the *light* which *may* be *resisted*, and *abused*, and in part *blown out*, will speedily come with *Light irresistible*, and will teach the *proud*, the *scornful*,

ful, the unmerciful, the self-conceited, the malicious, and the violent, so effectually to know themselves, as that no more exhortations shall be necessary for the reception of his convictions; nor will he or his servants any more beseech men to consider and know their sin and misery, nor be beholden to them to believe and confess it. See Jude v. 14. 15. And is there no Remedy for a stupefied inconsiderate soul? Is there no prevention of so terrible a self-knowledge, as the Light of Judgement, and the fire of Hell will else procure? Yes, the remedy is certain, easie, and at hand: even to know themselves till they are driven to study, and seek and know the Father and his Son Jesus Christ: Joh. 17. 3. And yet is the Salvation of most as hopeless almost as if there were no remedie, because no perswasion can prevail with them to use it. Lord, what hath thus lockt up the minds and hearts of sinners against thy truth and thee? what hath made Reasonable man so unreasonable, and a self-loving nature so

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mortally to hate it self? O thou that
openest and no man shutteth, use the
Key that openeth Hearts; Come in
with thy Wisdome and thy Love, and
all this blindness and obstinacy will be
gone. At least commit not the safety
of thy flock, to such as will not know
themselves: But gather thy remnant,
and bring them to their folds, and let
them be fruitful and increase; and set up
shepherds over them, which shall feed
them, and let them fear no more, nor be
dismayed, nor be lacking, Jer. 23. 3, 4.
Ordain a place for them, plant them, and
and let them dwell therein unmoved; and
let not the children of wickedness waste
them any more; 1 Chron.: 17. 9. As a
shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day
that he is among his sheep that
are scattered, so seek out thy sheep
and deliver them out of all places where
they have been scattered in the cloudy and
dark day, Ezek. 34. 12, Save thy people
and blessthine inheritance: feed them also,
and lift them up for ever, Psal. 28. 9.

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Mary Hanson how
Books

Son
Hosannah to King David
Hosannah to Christ
in y^e Almighty name both
Hosannah my right



and

Blessed are the dead y^e Lord
in y^e Lord he saith the
spirit & their words doe
follow:

It comes to you
that when Jesus came to
call that the

and

